

OTTOMAN WAR ON THE DANUBE:
STATE, SUBJECT, AND SOLDIER
(1853-1856)

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by
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Ankara
December 2013

To my family

**OTTOMAN WAR ON THE DANUBE:
STATE, SUBJECT, AND SOLDIER
(1853-1856)**

Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ANKARA**

December 2013

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

OTTOMAN WAR ON THE DANUBE: STATE, SUBJECT, AND SOLDIER (1853-1856)

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December 2013

This study analyzes the Danubian front of the Crimean War, which includes the military activities in the Ottoman Bulgaria, Dobruja and the Principalities. A comparison between Russian and Ottoman military activities in the Balkan theater helps to explain the “Ottoman and Russian War of 1853-1856” separate from the existing Eurocentric literature. This study not only explains the war as a product of interstate politics but also concentrates on the individual participants, both combatants and civilians. Logistics, intelligence activities, and prisoners of war will be focused on in addition to the battles to discuss the Danubian front from a broader perspective.

There are three main chapters discussing the Danubian front of the Crimean War: “before the front”, “at the front” and “behind the front”. However, before explaining the battles in particular and the Danubian front in general, the legacy of the Crimean War historiography is reviewed and pre-war diplomacy is re-examined.

Keywords: Danubian Front, Crimean War, Ottoman Army, Russian Army, Ottoman Society, Prisoners of War, Military Intelligence

ÖZET

TUNA'DA OSMANLI HARBİ: DEVLET, TEBAAA VE ASKER (1853-1856)

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Aralık 2013

Bu çalışma, Kırım Harbi'nin Tuna Cephesi'ni incelemektedir. Bu cephe Bulgaristan, Dobruca ve Memleketeyn'deki askeri harekâtı içine almaktadır. Rusya ve Osmanlı Devletlerinin Balkanlardaki askeri harekâtının mukayesesesi, "1853-1856 Osmanlı-Rus Harbi"ni Avrupa merkezli Kırım Harbi literatüründen daha farklı bir şekilde tartışmaya imkân tanımaktadır. Bu çalışma savaşı, sadece devletler arası politikanın bir sonucu olarak incelememekte, cephedeki bireyi (muharip ve sivil) tartışmaktadır. Bu tezde, muharebelerle birlikte lojistik, istihbarat ve savaş esirleri de ele alınmış; böylelikle Tuna Cephesi geniş bir perspektiften tahlil edilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Tuna Cephesi üç ana bölümde incelenmiştir: "cephe öncesi", "cephe" ve "cephe gerisi". Savaşa geçmeden önce Kırım Harbi tarihyazımı ve savaş öncesi diploması tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tuna Cephesi, Kırım Harbi, Osmanlı Ordusu, Rus Ordusu, Osmanlı Toplumu, Savaş Esiri, Askeri İstihbarat

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During the research, I have used many archives and libraries. I want to thank the personnel of the GARF and the War Section of the Lenin Library in Moscow. Their politeness was rare in Russia. The conditions were somewhat difficult in ATASE and RGVIA, but it was not because of the personnel to whom I am also grateful.

I have presented some chapters of this study in conferences in Istanbul, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Chicago, Sofia, and Lugansk, and enjoyed valuable comments of the participants. Military history workshops in Şehir University and Harp Akademisi in Istanbul were invaluable.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.The Aim and Scope

“The Charge of the Light Brigade”, “The Thin Red Line”, heroine Florence Nightingale, and hero Eduard Todleben continue to be a part of historical memory and history writing. However, no such historical name or concept similarly triggers the cultural memories of the Ottoman participation in the Crimean War because most of the Ottoman actions in the war have yet to be treated as a historical subject. This study concentrates on the Danubian front of the Crimean War, which includes the military activities in the Ottoman Bulgaria, Dobruja and the Principalities. While the Ottomans’ participation in decision-making and battle maneuvers was not central in the Crimean peninsula, the Ottoman commanders, privates, and peasants are visible on the Danube and in the Caucasus. Therefore, any narrative of the war without a sufficient discussion of the Danubian and the Caucasian fronts would ultimately underestimate the Ottoman role in the conflict. Accordingly, a comparison between Russian and Ottoman military activities in the Balkan theater can help explain an overlooked aspect of the Crimean War and analyze the “Ottoman and Russian War of 1853-1856” separate from the existing Eurocentric literature.

One shortcoming of the Crimean War historiography is its narrow perception of warfare, focusing on battles and overlooking other important aspects, such as logistics, prisoners of war and military intelligence. This dissertation aims to narrate the military activities occurring in the Balkans during the Crimean War along with their social and political repercussions. It is also an attempt to understand the individuals (i.e., soldier, peasant, spy and diplomat) who experienced war in the middle of the nineteenth century by concentrating on social, political and military issues in a specific time and space in the Ottoman Empire: the Ottoman Balkans from 1853 to 1856. Accordingly, by discussing logistics, intelligence activities, and prisoners of war, this work brings out some useful information about the Ottoman and Russian societies in the 19th century.

The Crimean War has been perceived as irrelevant because it did not greatly alter European political boundaries. However, this confrontation actually had a tremendous impact on people's lives and a long-term social effect in the region. This war affected social and psychological boundaries more than the political ones. Loyalties changed or were influenced by the ongoing war. Russian Muslims and Ottoman Orthodox believers developed mistrust against their respective states and the state was more suspicious of its own subjects. Massive migrations after the war were a result of alienation from the state, a process promoted by the state to eliminate undesired populations, as in the case of the exodus of the Crimean Tatars. Some Bulgarians also moved with the Russian army to the southern boundaries of Russia. A significant number of Bulgarians, Serbians and Greeks moved Russia throughout the 19th century. Such contacts continued to foster the relations between Russia and the Ottoman Balkans, which would prepare the ground for the more intimate

collaboration between the Russian army and the local Christian population in the war of 1877-78.

Although the focus of the narrative is the Danubian front, the developments in other fronts have also been referenced throughout the study. Accordingly, in analyzing these wartime developments, the narrative also includes the Russian town of Ryazan, where Ottoman prisoners were detained, and a European capital where diplomatic activities intensified. Thus, I have tried to place my subject matter in the broader context of the Crimean War and the Russo-Ottoman wars.

Previous studies display inconsistency in the dates and details of the battles on the Danube. Even the most basic facts of the war are unclear. For example, three different chronologies of the Crimean War offer different dates for the Siege of Silistre: 14 April - 23 June¹, 15 May – 29 June² and 24 March – 23 June³. This study will discuss the inconsistent and contradictory information about the preparations, battles and results and will provide a clear and accurate picture of the military actions based on the archival documents.

Thus, this subject matter can contribute to the present literature in two respects: elaborating on an overlooked phase of the Crimean War and exploration and exploitation of new research materials. This narrative is also helpful for those studying the Ottoman army and government in the *Tanzimat* period by providing valuable clues to the function and capabilities of the Ottoman administration and military.

¹ *Kırım Savaşı'nın 150nci Yılı/150th Anniversary of the Crimean War* (İstanbul, 2006), p. 194.

² Saim Besbelli, *1853-1856 Osmanlı-Rus ve Kırım Savaşı Deniz Harekâti* (Ankara, 1977), p. 122.

³ *Vostochnaya voyna 1853-1856 godov. Novye materialy i novoe osmyslenie* (Simferopol, 2005), p. 7.

1.2.The Method

This is a qualitative work where a historical event has been discussed by the usage of original materials. Studying the Danubian front requires extensive use of Ottoman and Russian archival materials, which have been underexploited by students of the Crimean War. The Ottoman documents and secondary materials provide a more balanced picture when used in conjunction with the reminiscences of Russian and British officers as well as additional primary and secondary sources in Russian and English. For instance, Ömer Lütfi Pasha's letters to the *Seraskerlik* (War Ministry) provide interesting clues about the Ottoman army's preparations, plans, and expectations. Articles, monographs and documents relevant to this study are written in several languages. This study cannot repeat all scientific research accumulated on this topic. Instead, it will attempt to highlight details of the war that have only been studied superficially and aim to correct the historical record on several aspects of the Ottoman diplomatic and war efforts.

Deficiencies in the Ottoman sources usually prevent the student of the subject from presenting a balanced picture. Although the Russian sources include detailed information on which building a narrative is easy, the Ottoman materials are usually scattered and difficult to employ. Thus, sources have generally pushed me to write more on the Russians. However, one major aim of this study is to explore the unknown and unpublicized aspects of the Crimean War, which has led me to research and write more about the Ottomans. In many cases I used the more accessible Russian sources in an effort to focus more on the Ottoman experiences.

Thus, this study is an attempt to present an analytical work on the Danubian

front examining the theater in light of Russian and Ottoman archival witnesses and published sources.

1.3. The Organization

The first chapter is devoted to the critical examination of the Crimean War literature. In this chapter, the existing literature will be discussed with a special emphasis on overlooked aspects of the Crimean War. It is also underlined that the existing literature is now more accessible than only a few years ago thanks to the digital libraries.

The second chapter focuses on the pre-war diplomacy, determining perceptions in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. This section will briefly mention the conflict over the Holy Places and subsequent unsuccessful mission of Prince Menshikov, which has been discussed extensively elsewhere. The Russian plans for capturing Istanbul will be analyzed with the diplomatic activities to resolve the question of Holy Places. Comprehending the military confrontations on the Danube is impossible without understanding the elaborate diplomatic circumstances that led to few battles in 1853 but eventually evolved into a European war.

The third chapter discusses the potential and preparations of the rivaling armies before the war. The transfer of the Allied forces to the Ottoman lands and their encampment in Gelibolu (Gallipoli), Istanbul, Varna, and Balçık and the gradual participation of Britain and France in the ongoing war are also explained. The French expedition to Dobruja and the planned Ottoman expedition to Bessarabia are also important incidents of the Danubian front that require further elaboration. Austrian

involvement in the conflict, Russian evacuation of the Principalities, and the Ottoman and Austrian invasions of Bucharest and the Principalities will also be analyzed.

The fourth chapter addresses the battles on the Danube. The Danube Front includes several military engagements between the Ottoman and Russian forces, including Kalafat (27 October 1853), Olteniçe (Oltenitza) (4 November 1853), Çatana (Çetate) (6 January 1854), the siege of Silistre (May-June 1854), Yergöğü (Giurgiu) (7 July 1854), and several other minor fights.

The fifth chapter discusses behind the front developments. In this chapter, espionage, military-civilian relations and prisoners of war are discussed. The relations of the Russian and Ottoman armies with the local population to supply their material needs and to obtain the strategic wartime intelligence are the major subjects. The interesting stories of the Russian and Ottoman prisoners of war provide insight about war's impact on the life of people behind the front.

This study is thematic and aims to focus on all aspects of a front (i.e., social, political and military). Because the narrative is not chronological, some of the same topics are studied from various aspects in different chapters. For instance, the Ottoman irregulars are examined in Chapters 3.3. and 5.3.

1.4. The Questions

Although I have defined a specific topic, it has taken me many years to conceptualize and write this dissertation. The lack of personal biographies of the commanders is a lacuna in the Ottoman Empire military history and presents a

significant challenge to analyzing Ottoman military activities. The lack of sufficient studies about Ottoman fortresses and defense systems presents another difficulty for historians. Thus, writing about the Ottoman wars is sometimes similar to building without the necessary foundations. I frequently became absorbed in my research questions. Researching the treatment of prisoners of war, the role and efficiency of secret agents, and even the role of the Ottoman government in the declaration of the war—a more traditional topic—took more time than I previously anticipated.

Many military and social aspects of the Russo-Ottoman wars have not yet been described. For example, astonishingly little has so far been written on the prisoners of war. Experiences of the Russian prisoners in the Ottoman Empire are valuable both for illuminating the Russo-Ottoman conflicts and for understanding Russo-Ottoman social relations. This dissertation aims to address the following questions: What were the motives of the Ottomans and Russians at the beginning of the war? Given their confidence in Western support, did the Ottomans actually want a war against Russia? What was the nature of the war on the Danube? How efficient was the Ottoman army during the first year of the war? Did the Ottoman government actually want a military alliance with Britain and France? Did the Ottomans actually need Western support to win the war? What kind of effects had the Crimean War on the state-society relations? I was not able to articulate adequate answers for all of the questions posed throughout the dissertation. However, this dissertation will contribute original ideas to the historical record and provide more satisfactory explanations of certain aspects of the war than the present literature.

In many cases, Western and Russian sources make contradictory claims. For example, sources disagree about the Ottoman army's organization and capability.

According to Western sources, the Ottoman army was poorly organized and equipped and was inferior to its enemy. On the contrary, the Russian sources suggest that the Ottoman army was better organized and equipped than the Russian counterpart. I hope this study will be useful for assessing the capabilities and functions of the Ottoman army in the mid-nineteenth century, which will improve our understanding of how the *Tanzimat* period affected the Ottoman military establishment. Accordingly, commanders from various nationalities ranging from fugitive Poles and Hungarians to Brits and Italians; new military technology, such as the minié rifle; and new methods of conscription will be described to better explain the confrontation between the Russian and Ottoman armies on the Danube.

Correspondence between the Porte, the Danubian army and several embassies in the European capitals illuminate Ottoman diplomacy, perceptions and concerns. Using Turkish archival materials facilitates the reevaluation of diplomatic activities before and during the Crimean War, helping to explain the outbreak of the war and establish a more balanced picture of diplomatic activities. Saab and Badem provided important evidence about the diplomacy of the Sublime Porte. Saab emphasized the rationality of the Ottoman statesmen, which the existing literature almost totally ignored; Badem highlighted the personal rivalries of the Ottoman political decision makers. Accordingly, this study argues that the consistency of Ottoman diplomacy and the relevance of Ottoman concerns, not Ottoman stubbornness or irrationality, led to the war. In this sense, the rationality of the Ottoman decision makers explains the path to war in 1853 better than their irrationality and fanaticism.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Legacy of the Crimean War Historiography

The Crimean War as a historical subject has a remarkable literature of hundreds of monographs and articles in many languages. Moreover, many primary sources such as diaries, letters, and official documents have been published. In his 1999 bibliography, Fikret Turan cited 657 books.⁴ Although Turan's bibliography includes many studies in various languages, such as German, Arabic, Greek and Rumanian, it is far from comprehensive. Only a handful of Russian books are listed, and numerous personal accounts are omitted. As for the Russian sources, the bibliographic narrative prepared by V. E. Bagdasarian and S. G. Tolstoy is comprehensive, but not exhaustive.⁵ Brison D. Gooch's out-dated article is another bibliographic study.⁶ In his book, James Reid briefly evaluated the historiography of the Crimean War.⁷ Norman Rich, David Goldfrank and Winfried Baumgart included

⁴ Fikret Turan, *The Crimean War Bibliography* (Istanbul, 1999).

⁵ V. E. Bagdasarian and S. G. Tolstoy, *Russkaya voyna: stolietni istoriograficheskii opyt osmysleniya Krymskoi kampanii* (Moscow, 2002).

⁶ Brison D. Gooch, "A Century of Historiography on the Origins of the Crimean War", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (1956), pp. 33-58.

⁷ James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse 1839-1878* (Stuttgart, 2000).

useful annotated bibliographies with their studies.⁸ Candan Badem's recent study includes a critical analysis of the Turkish/Ottoman and Russian sources.⁹

Numerous studies of the Crimean War have still been appearing in different languages. Several Crimean War novelties have transformed into separate historical subjects, such as the roles of Florence Nightingale and Nikolai Ivanovich Pirogov in medical care, Roger Fenton as a photographer, and William Howard Russell as a war correspondent. Because sources about the Crimean War are voluminous, researchers must be selective in reviewing the literature. Most secondary sources consulted for this study are written in English and Russian. Linguistic limitations prevent me from efficiently utilizing most sources in French, German, Spanish, Polish and Italian, but I have employed several of the most important sources in these languages. Turkish/Ottoman sources are rarely used in the narrative because so few of them exist.

2.1.1. The First Modern War

The Crimean War was unique in many respects. Telegraphy, photography and new military technology, including ironclad warships and minié rifles, changed the nature of warfare so dramatically that the Crimean War has frequently been called as the first “media war”, “trench war” and “modern war”. Steam-ships, railways, and electric telegraphs enabled activities that had been impossible in previous conflicts. Due to technological innovations, the periodical press disseminated information on

⁸ Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War: A Cautionary Tale* (1991); David Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (London, 1994); Winfried Baumgart, *The Crimean War 1853-1856* (London, 1999).

⁹ Candan Badem, *Ottoman Crimean War (1853-1856)* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 1-45.

an unprecedented scale, which allowed the emergence of a wartime literature. Thus, the Crimean War differed from preceding wars in its narration of hostilities.

Correspondents based at the various seats of war colorfully and immediately described battles, and news about incidents on the fronts arrived home quickly. Detailed news regarding diplomatic activities in European capitals, comprehensive reports from battlefields, and official declarations and letters regularly appeared in contemporary periodicals. *The Times*, *The Daily News*, *The Illustrated London News*, *Hermannstadt Zeitung*, *Sankt Peterburgskie vedomosti*, *Severnaya pchela*, *Russkii invalid*, *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, *Takvim-i Vekâyi*, and *Ceride-i Havâdis* reserved a significant portion of their pages to the coverage of war incidents. Statesmen sometimes acquired information regarding opponents from the newspapers before official correspondence arrived, and opponents sometimes learned more about the enemy from newspaper articles than espionage activities.

Joseph Archer Crowe and Constantine Guys arrived at the war theater as correspondents to *The Illustrated London News*. Edwin L. Godkin worked for *The Daily News*, N. A. Woods for *The Morning Herald*, and Charles Duncan and Captain Maxwell for *The Morning Chronicle*. *The Times* dispatched correspondents to every corner of the conflict and played a leading role in the British media, enjoying tremendous influence on public opinion. William Howard Russell, one of the *Times'* correspondents in the field, became the most famous and influential journalist. Having arrived in theater in early 1854, Russell was critical of the preparations and conduct of the war.¹⁰ Karl Marx also regularly wrote articles for the *New York Daily Tribune* about the battles and rival armies as well as the Eastern Question in

¹⁰ His correspondences would soon be published. W[illiam] H[oward] Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan* (London, 1855); *From the Death of Lord Raglan to the Evacuation of the Crimea* (London, 1856); *The British Expedition to the Crimea* (London, 1858).

general.¹¹ Nikolai V. Berg, who dispatched letters from the Crimean peninsula in 1855, was the first Russian war correspondent.

Military personnel were another source of authentic information from the war front. Postal service facilities enabled soldiers and sailors to send their simple narratives home, describing daily life and often complaining of conditions. Lieutenant Nasmyth, a British officer in Silistre, was one of the soldiers who dispatched letters to *The Times*. Many officers also sent drawings of the camps and battles, which were often frequently used by *The Illustrated London News*. Thus, people on the home had opportunities to acquire detailed and up-to-date information about ongoing fighting.

2.1.2. Early Writings

Many personal accounts written in English were published soon after the war began. Books and articles by British and French officers and others with experience relevant to the Eastern Question were popular. Artillery officer Edward Bruce Hamley regularly published letters in *Blackwood's Magazine* under the title “The Story of the Campaign Written in a Tent in the Crimea”. Some of the author’s letters were printed in Boston without his permission when he was still in Sevastopol. His letters would later be published in London as well.¹² Hamley was not the only officer who found time to write from the front. As participants and observers, Lieutenant Colonel John Adye, Major Whitworth Porter, George Cavendish Taylor, and several

¹¹ See, Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question: A Reprint of Letters Written 1853-1856 Dealing with the Events of the Crimean War*, edited by Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling (London, 1897).

¹² Maj. E. Bruce Hamley, *The Story of the Campaign: A Complete Narrative of the War in Southern Russia. Written in a Tent in the Crimea* (Boston, 1855); Lieut.-Col. E. Bruce Hamley, *The Story of the Campaign of Sebastopol Written in the Camp* (Edinburgh and London, 1855).

anonymous writers described many realities of the ongoing hostilities.¹³ Colonel Frederic Robinson published one of the first diaries of the Crimean War.¹⁴ The letters of Somerset John Gough Calthorpe, nephew and aide-de-camp to the British Commander-in-Chief, disclosed several details concerning the activities of the British Headquarters.¹⁵ Edward Money described Stratford Redcliffe's plan to form an irregular cavalry force under British command from the *başibozuks* under the British command.¹⁶ General György Klapka, the Hungarian national hero and a prominent anti-Russian military figure, also penned his observations about the war although he was not a participant.¹⁷ Some battlefield letters, diaries and notes were edited and published decades after the war after these young subordinate officers of the Crimean War were promoted to be generals, including Lieutenant-General Charles Ash Windham's diary and the letters of Lieutenant (later General) Charles George Gordon and Captain (later General) Charles Byndar Beauchamp Walker.¹⁸

European officers commissioned in the Ottoman army provided close observations of Ottoman warfare. Humphry Sandwith, a British doctor on the Caucasian Front, was one of the harshest critics of the Ottoman military

¹³ *A Visit to Sebastopol: a Week after its Fall*, by an officer of the Anglo-Turkish contingent (London, 1856); *The Powers of Europe and Fall of Sebastopol*, by a British Officer (Boston, 1857); Whitworth Porter, *Life in the Trenches before Sebastopol* (London, 1856); George Cavendish Taylor, *Journal of Adventures with the British Army*, 2 vols. (London, 1856); Lieutenant Colonel John Adye, *A Review of the Crimean War to the Winter of 1854-1855* (London, 1860); Captain Gleig, *The Crimean Enterprise: Predictions and Plans* (Edinburgh, 1857).

¹⁴ Frederic Robinson, *Diary of the Crimean War* (London, 1856).

¹⁵ [Colonel John Calthorpe], *Letters from Head-Quarters or the Realities of the War in the Crimea*, 2 vols. (London, 1856).

¹⁶ Unfortunately, these forces, which were popularly called as "Beatson's Horse", could not find time to be tested, and finally disbanded in 1856. Edward Money, *Twelve Months with the Bashi-Bazouks* (London, 1857).

¹⁷ General George Klapka, *The War in the East from the Year 1853 till July 1855* (London, 1855).

¹⁸ Charles Ash Windham, *The Crimean Diary and Letters of Lieut. General Charles Windham, K.C.B* (London, 1897); *General Gordon's Letters from the Crimea, the Danube and Armenia*, edited by Demetrius C. Boulger (London, 1884); *Days of a Soldier's Life: Being Letters Written by the Late General Sir C. P. Beauchamp Walker, K.C.B during Active Service in the Crimean, Chinese, Austro-Prussian (1866), and Franco-German Wars (1871)* (London, 1894).

administration.¹⁹ Charles Duncan and Colonel Atwell Lake, who served in the Ottoman army, also offered stories of the Ottoman war effort in the Caucasus.²⁰ Laurence Oliphant, a British journalist and adventurer who accompanied Ömer Lütfi Pasha's Caucasian campaign to save the Kars Fortress, disclosed a little known aspect of the Crimean War.²¹ Polish and Hungarian officers who served in the Ottoman army with Muslim names also recorded their experiences such as György Kmety's (İsmail Pasha) work on the defense of Kars.²² The memoirs of one European officer in the service of the Ottoman navy, Adolphus Slade (Müşavir Pasha), had an insider's approach to the Ottoman military and government. In his memoirs, which were published in 1867 after he was already retired from the Ottoman navy, Slade clearly took a pro-Ottoman stance, thereby parting from all other British officers in the Ottoman service.²³

Through the presence of the Allied military forces and their logistical enterprises, "The East" became more accessible to Europeans. Thus, in addition to military figures, several non-combatants,²⁴ including women, happened to be in the Ottoman lands or the Crimea during the war. Lady Emilia Bithynia Hornby, Marianne Young, Frances Isabella Duberly, Alicia Blackwood, and Mary Seacole wrote about their observations.²⁵ The wartime letters of Lady Hornby, wife of a

¹⁹ Humphry Sandwith, *A Narrative of the Siege of Kars* (London, 1856).

²⁰ Colonel Henry Atwell Lake, *Kars and Our Captivity in Russia* (London, 1856). *A Narrative of the Defence of Kars* (London, 1857); Charles Duncan, *A Campaign with the Turks in Asia* (London, 1855).

²¹ Laurence Oliphant, *The Trans-Caucasian Campaign of the Turkish Army under Omer Pasha* (Edinburg and London, 1856).

²² George Kmety, *A Narrative of the Defense of Kars on the 29th September, 1856*, translated from German (London, 1856).

²³ Adolphus Slade, *Turkey and the Crimean War* (London, 1867). It was recently translated into Turkish. Sir Adolphus Slade, *Müşavir Paşa'nın Kırım Harbi Anıları*, translated and edited by Candan Badem (İstanbul, 2012).

²⁴ [Henry Jeffreys Bushby] A non-combatant, *A Month in the Camp before Sebastopol* (London, 1855).

²⁵ Marianne Young, *Our Camp in Turkey and the Way to it* (London, 1854); Frances Isabella Duberly, *A Journal Kept during the Russian War* (London, 1855); Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs.*

British diplomat in Istanbul, were compiled into a book published in 1858 in London and Philadelphia. The revised version appeared in 1863. Mrs. Young observed the allied preparations for war in the Gelibolu (Gallipoli) and Varna camps. She described the French and English army camps and depicted the shortcomings of the preparatory activities at the beginning of the campaign in 1854. Another important female witness was Alicia Blackwood, who administered a hospital at Üsküdar (Scutari) upon the invitation of Miss Nightingale. Frances Isabella Duberly, wife of British officer Henry Duberly, resided with her husband in camps in Gelibolu and Varna and also attended the Crimean campaign.²⁶ Her book, first published in 1855, sold so successfully that a second edition appeared the following year.

George Dodd's book, which contained many details of the hostilities, is an example of the accumulation of war information for 1856 alone.²⁷ However, the first in-depth account of the war in English emerged in the 1860s in the hands of Alexander William Kinglake, who accompanied Lord Raglan to the Crimea. Kinglake, a well-known writer and orientalist wrote his account over ten years based on official documents, particularly the Raglan Papers. Although nine volumes were published, unfortunately, his account was incomplete because the narrative ends with the death of Lord Raglan.²⁸ Whereas Dodd's history includes every campaign of the war, Kinglake concentrated on the key operations in the Crimean peninsula. Crimean War historiography followed Kinglake's example, which marginalized many fronts of the Crimean War, as the name of the war itself suggests.

Seacole in Many Lands (London, 1857); Mrs. Edmund Hornby, *In and around Stamboul*, 2 vols. (London, 1858); Alicia Blackwood, *Narrative of Personal Experiences and Impressions during a Residence on the Bosphorus throughout the Crimean War* (London, 1881).

²⁶ Mrs. Duberly's *Campaigns: an Englishwoman's experiences in the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny*, edited by Evelyn Ernest Percy Tisdall (London, 1963); *Mrs. Duberly's War: Journal and Letters from the Crimea, 1854-6*, edited by Christine Kelly (Oxford, 2007).

²⁷ George Dodd, *Pictorial History of the Russian War 1854-5-6* (Edinburgh and London, 1856).

²⁸ Alexander William Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea: its Origin, and an Account of its Progress* (London, 1885).

A noteworthy literature in Russian also emerged, but it took a different shape and reflected different content, mainly due to strict censorship and state control over publications. With permission from and under the guidance of the Russian government, Nikolai Putilov compiled and published news stories, personal letters, commentaries, literary works and official documents in 33 volumes from 1855 to 1859.²⁹ Nikolai Dubrovin similarly compiled first hand materials in five colossal volumes in the 1870s.³⁰ Diaries and notes appeared in the journals and collections, and many of them were published as books.³¹ *Russkaya starina, Russkii arkhiv, Istoricheskii vestnik, Voennyi sbornik, Kavkazskii sbornik, Morskoi sbornik, Artilleriiskii zhurnal, Russkii vestnik, Otechestvennye zapiski, Biblioteka dlya chtenia* published reminiscences of the Crimean War participants. Due to strict censorship, publishing unbiased impressions of the war was impossible in the Russian Empire. Nonetheless, every war incident was recorded by a Russian participant in the 19th century.³²

Because state sponsorship was a necessity for academic publication, Russian monographs about the Crimean War appeared later than Western ones. Modest I. Bogdanovich was the first Russian historian to study the Crimean War.³³ Eduard I. Todleben, hero of Sevastopol, headed a committee to prepare the history of the Russian defense at Sivastopol. His book was published in Russian and French and

²⁹ *Sbornik izvestii, otnosiashchikhsia do nastoiashchei voiny*, edited by Nikolai Putilov, 33 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1855-1859).

³⁰ *Materialy dlya istorii Krymskoi voiny i oborony Sevastoliya*, edited by Nikolai F. Dubrovin, 5 vols. (1871-1874)

³¹ P. Simanskii, *Boi pri Chetati 1853 – 25 Dekabria – 1903* (St. Petersburg, 1904); *Vospominaniya Prokofiya Antonovicha Podpalova, uchastnika v Dunaiskom pokhode 1853 – 4 gg i v Sevastopol'skoi oborone* (Kiev, 1904); *Vospominaniya ofitsera voennykh deistviyakh na dune v 1853 i 1854 godah. Iz dnevnika P. B.* (St. Petersburg, 1887); A[leksandr] A[leksandrovich] Genritsi, *Vospominaniya o vostochnoi voine 1854-1856* (St. Petersburg, 1878).

³² Only just after the battle at the village of Çatana in Little Wallachia a booklet was prepared according to the Russian official documents and testimonies of the participants. *Opisanie srazheniya pri d. chetati 25 dekabria 1853 g.* (St. Petersburg, 1854).

³³ M. I. Bogdanovich, *Opisanie ekspeditsii anglo-frantsuzov v Krym, 1854 – 1855 gg.* (St. Petersburg, 1856).

was soon translated into German. Todleben completed the study in four years. Publication in three languages most likely reflected the Russian desire to have its official view widely read and recognized.³⁴ Todleben's study was the first serious account of the Russian involvement in the war. In the 1870s, on the eve of a new war with the Ottoman Empire, there was a vigorous interest in the Crimean War. Bogdanovich's *Vostochnaya voyna* was the first complete treatment of the Crimean War, including all its battlefields and diplomatic activities.³⁵ In addition to Bogdanovich, Nikolai F. Dubrovin, another officer historian, pioneered the historical study of the Crimean War. Dubrovin edited a five-volume anthology of materials and composed volumes of books on the war.³⁶ The work of Nikolai N. Muravyov, the Russian commander who captured Kars Fortress, is still one of the best works about the Caucasian front.³⁷

A noteworthy body of literature about the Crimean War emerged in German during the war because the German-speaking part of Europe had a significant interest in the war, particularly as it affected the Balkans. Most contributors were anonymous. Some writers conveyed authentic information on the Ottoman army.³⁸ Andrei N. Petrov's and Egor P. Kovalevskii's accounts were translated to German in the same year they were published in Russian.

³⁴ Eduard I. Totleben, *Opisanie oborony goroda Sevastopolia*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1863); E. de Todleben, *Défense de Sébastopol*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1863). Eduard von Todleben, *Die Vertheidigung von Sebastopol*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1864).

³⁵ M.I. Bogdanovich, *Vostochnaya voyna 1853-1856 gg.*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1876).

³⁶ Nikolai Dubrovin, *Materialy dlya istorii Krymskoi voiny i oborony Sevastopolia*, 5 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1871-1874); *Trekhsoz-soroka-deviati-dnevnaya zashchita Sevastopolia* (St. Petersburg, 1872); *Vostochnaya voyna 1853-1856 gg. Obzor sobytii po povodu sochinenia* (St. Petersburg, 1878); *Istoria Krymskoi voiny i oborony Sevastopolia*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1900).

³⁷ N[ikolai] N[ikolaievich] Muravyov, *Voina za Kavkazom v 1855 godu*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1876-1877)

³⁸ *Der russisch-türkische krieg in den Jahren 1853 und 1854* (Karlsruhe, 1854); *Der russisch-türkische krieg in Europa 1853, bis zum März 1854* (Kiel, 1854); August Prinz, *Der russisch-türkische krieg nach brieflichen Mittheilungen und Originalberichten* (Hamburg, 1855); *Der russisch-türkische krieg in Europa und Asien* (Vienna, 1854); *Der russisch-türkische kriegs-schauplatz* (Vienna, 1854).

English and French literature contains few references to the Ottoman war effort. However, remarks by the above-mentioned observers about the Ottoman army and government offer some clues to understanding the successes and failures of the Ottoman war machine. The Russian accounts offer more details about the Ottoman participation in the war.

In 1873, a play with a patriotic tone written by famous Ottoman author Namık Kemal about the Siege of Silistre attracted so much popular sympathy in Istanbul that the author was exiled to Cyprus. The reminiscences of Ahmed Nafiz Efendi on the Siege of Silistre were published in the same year.³⁹ Hakkı Tarık Us, editor of the Latin alphabet version of these memoirs, convincingly argued that Namık Kemal wrote them based on memoirs of an existing officer.⁴⁰ A condensed version of the memoirs was printed in a Russian journal in 1875.⁴¹ Namık Kemal was the first Ottoman author who had a real interest in the Crimean War. The first monograph in Turkish is Hüseyin Hüsnü's *Saika-i Zafer*. This book is an unfinished account that only describes events until the Battle of Olteniçe on 4 November 1853.⁴² Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, famous Ottoman historian and statesman, provided some interesting details on the Crimean War in his works *Tezâkir* and *Mariżât*. Neither of these works were intended for publication. The former included the notes of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha to be given to the next Ottoman chronicler, Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, and the latter was prepared upon the order of Abdulhamid II.⁴³ Although Ahmed Lütfi's history includes the Crimean War period, he mentions the wartime events without

³⁹ Ahmed Nafiz, *Silistre Muhasarasi* (İstanbul, 1290 [1873]).

⁴⁰ Namık Kemal, *Silistre Muhasarasi: Kalede Bulunan Gazilerden Yüzbaşı Ahmed Nafiz'in Hatıraları*, prepared and transcribed by Hakkı Tarık Us (İstanbul, 1946).

⁴¹ "Silistriya 1854 g. Zapiski Nafiz-effendi", *Voennyi sbornik*, 1875, no. 12, pp. 488-502.

⁴² Hüseyin Hüsnü, *Saika-i Zafer* (İstanbul, 1292 [1876]).

⁴³ Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, edited by Cavid Baysun, 4 vols. (Ankara, 1991); *Ma'rûzât*, edited by Yusuf Halaçoğlu, (İstanbul, 1980).

any personal evaluations or analytic observations.⁴⁴ The only Ottoman officer who recorded his memories during the Crimean War is Mustafa Zarif Pasha, who commanded the Anatolian army. Unfortunately, however, his recollections were mainly devoted to trivial personal experiences and explain little about the war.

2.1.3. Crimean War Literature in the 20th Century

At the turn of the 20th century, another Russian officer and historian attempted a fresh examination of the Crimean War using French and Russian official papers. The archival materials used for the narrative were also published in two separate volumes. Subsequent scholars have appreciated these published documents, particularly during the Cold War, when the Russian archives were practically inaccessible. However, Zayonchkovskii's narrative was left unfinished due to the commencement of the First World War.⁴⁵ The Crimean War was a popular Soviet historical topic in the 1940s and 1950s, evidently as a result of World War II, in which the Crimean peninsula again became a theater of war against a European power. Igor V. Beztuzhev, Boris I. Zverev, L. Gorev, and most importantly, Evgenii V. Tarle studied the Crimean War.⁴⁶ Tarle's book, which successfully covers all fronts in two volumes, is still one of the best on the subject. In the 1970s, Hadji Murat Ibragimbeyli wrote a book about the Caucasian front of the Crimean War

⁴⁴ Lütfi Efendi, *Vak'a-nüvis Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarihi*, vol. IX, edited by Münir Aktepe (Istanbul, 1984).

⁴⁵ A. M. Zayonchkovskii, *Vostochnaya voyna 1853-1856*, 2 volumes text and 2 volumes enclosures (St. Petersburg, 1908-1913). In 2002, this book has been republished in 3 volumes, where text and enclosures are together, and documents in French are omitted.

⁴⁶ Evgenii Tarle, *Krymskaya voina*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1950); Boris I. Zverev, *Sinopskaya pobeda* (Simferopol, 1954); L. Gorev, *Voina 1853 - 1856 i oborona Sevastopolya* (Moscow, 1955); Igor Beztuzhev, *Krymskaya voina, 1853-1856* (Moscow, 1956).

arguing that the Caucasian people, including the Muslims, served in the Russian army against the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁷

In the West, scholarly interest in the Crimean War was refreshed in the 1930s with Harold Temperley's influential but unfinished diplomatic investigation.⁴⁸ However, similar to the Soviet historiography, Western scholars turned to the subject only after the World War II. Gavin B. Henderson and Brison D. Gooch re-evaluated the origins of the war based on French and the British archival sources.⁴⁹ In addition to diplomacy, war theatres in the Crimea also attracted considerable scholarship. Philip Warner and Christopher Hibbert described battles on the Crimean peninsula.⁵⁰ Ffrench Blake made a rare effort in the 1970s to cover all theaters of the war.⁵¹ In the 1970s, Ann Pottinger Saab and Paul W. Schroeder explored the Ottoman and Habsburg archives, respectively in attempts to explain the origins of the Crimean War.⁵² Schroeder portrayed the changes in the opinions of the European decision-makers during the political crisis, and demonstrated that foreign policy was not unanimous throughout the European governments. Although it is a well prepared monograph and the first study that combined Western, Russian and Ottoman sources, Saab's study lacks many Ottoman and Russian documents which were not available to her at that time.

⁴⁷ Hadji Murat Ibragimbeyli, *Kavkaz v Krymskoi voine 1853 – 1856 gg. i mezhunarodnoe otnosheniya* (Moscow, 1971).

⁴⁸ Harold Temperley, *England and the Near East: The Crimea* (London, 1936).

⁴⁹ Gavin B. Henderson, *Crimean War Diplomacy and Other Historical Essays* (Glasgow, 1947); Brison D. Gooch, *The New Bonapartist Generals in the Crimean War* (The Hague, 1959).

⁵⁰ Philip Warner, *The Crimean War. A Reappraisal* (New York, 1972); Christopher Hibbert, *The Destruction of Lord Raglan. A Tragedy of the Crimean War* (Baltimore, 1963).

⁵¹ R.L.V. Ffrench Blake, *The Crimean War* (London, 1971).

⁵² Ann Pottinger Saab, *The Origins of the Crimean Alliance* (Charlottesville, 1977); Paul W. Schroeder, *Austria, Great Britain and the Crimean War. The Destruction of the European Concert* (Ithaca, 1972).

Conversely, Albert Seaton and John Shelton Curtiss were first to introduce the heritage of the Russian historiography to the Western academy.⁵³ In the Cold War environment, Curtiss had limited access to the Russian archives. Although works of Seaton and Curtiss were then significant accomplishments, they are now outdated. Norman Rich composed his succinct but valuable book on Crimean War diplomacy by employing the existing literature, and it is still the most vivid and readable summary of the issue.⁵⁴ The first scholarly contribution in French was made in 1855 by the official chronicler Baron Bazancourt, who lived in the Crimea for five months.⁵⁵ This book is the first detailed work of the Allied campaign on the Crimean peninsula in any language. Camille Rousset's three-volume book, which was published two decades after the war, is still a classic.⁵⁶

Hayreddin Bey, an Ottoman bureaucrat, wrote a diplomatic history of the war in 1910.⁵⁷ It was not a complete treatment of the subject, covering only the question of Holy Places. The author took a pro-Russian tone in his arguments, although he mainly used French sources. In the first half of the 20th century, Fevzi [Kurtoğlu] and Tevfik Gürel penned their concise military histories of the war.⁵⁸ The second volume of *Mesail-i Mühimme-i Siyasiyye* is the most serious diplomatic study from the Turkish side. Ali Fuad Türkoglu added a valuable appendix, including many relevant documents.⁵⁹ In later years, the most important contributions came from

⁵³ Albert Seaton, *The Crimean War: A Russian Chronicle* (New York, 1977); John Shelton Curtiss, *Russia's Crimean War* (Durham, 1979).

⁵⁴ Norman Rich, *Why the Crimean War? A Cautionary Tale* (1985).

⁵⁵ Cesar Lecat Baron de Bazancourt, *The Crimean Expedition to the Capture of Sebastopol*, 2 vols. (London, 1856). He was sent to the Crimea in February of 1855 to observe the war and collect materials in order to write a history which would explore the French glory in the War.

⁵⁶ Camille F. M. Rousset, *Histoire de la Guerre de Crimée* (Paris, 1878).

⁵⁷ Hayreddin, *1270 Kırım Muharebesi'nin Tarih-i Siyasiisi* (İstanbul, 1326 [1910]); Hayrettin Bey, *Kırım Harbi*, transcribed and prepared by Şemsettin Kutlu (İstanbul, 1976).

⁵⁸ Fevzi Kurtoğlu, *1853-1855 Türk-Rus Harbi ve Kırım Seferi* (İstanbul, 1927); A. Tevfik Gürel, *1853-55 Türk-Rus ve Müttefiklerinin Kırım Savaşı* (İstanbul, 1935).

⁵⁹ Ali Fuat Türkoglu, *Mesail-i Mühimme-i Siyasiyye*, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara, 1957). This book was republished in 1987.

Turkish General Staff officers. Saim Besbelli narrated the naval aspects of the Crimean War, whereas Hikmet Süer discussed the Caucasian front. These works are significant due to their use of original archival materials, although they do not meet most academic standards of scholarship and analysis.⁶⁰

2.1.4. Recent Studies

Historians only obtained access to the Russian archives after the collapse of the Soviet Union. David Goldfrank was the first to write an updated history of the origins of the Crimean War in 1994 with new documentary evidence from the Russian archives.⁶¹ It is still the best book on the Crimean War diplomacy in the West in terms of its coverage of the Russian archival material by a Western scholar. Andrew Lambert discusses the British war strategy by locating the naval operations in the Baltic in the broader war planning.⁶² British military historian Trevor Royle's account of the battles on the Crimean peninsula provides a fresh view on the subject with proper attention to the Russian sources.⁶³ After decades of study in the European archives, Winfried Baumgart successfully covers all aspects of the war in a succinct way.⁶⁴ The American historian James Reid wrote a critique of the Ottoman *Tanzimat*, where he also addresses the Ottoman Empire's Crimean War experience, emphasizing on the failures of the Ottoman government and army. His account is mainly based on memories of Europeans who happened to be in the Ottoman

⁶⁰ Saim Besbelli, *1853-1856 Osmanlı-Rus ve Kırım Savaşı Deniz Harekâti* (Ankara, 1977); [Hikmet Süer], *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi. Osmanlı Devri. Osmanlı-Rus Kırım Harbi Kafkas Cephesi Harekâti (1853-1856)* (Ankara, 1986).

⁶¹ David Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (London, 1994).

⁶² Andrew Lambert, *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy against Russia 1853-56*, 2nd edition (Farnham, Surrey, 2011).

⁶³ Trevor Royle, *Crimea: The Great Crimean War 1854-1856* (New York, 2000).

⁶⁴ Winfried Baumgart, *The Crimean War 1853-1856* (London, 1999).

Empire, and he claims that the military reformation failed similar to the Porte's other modernizing efforts. This study is important for its concentration on the largely overlooked Ottoman irregular forces – the *başbozuks*.⁶⁵ The most recent study of the war is by Orlando Figes, a famous British historian of Russia and the Soviet Union.⁶⁶ It is a well written and readable account but contributes almost nothing new to diplomatic or military history.

Russian academic circles have lacked interest in the Crimean War since the collapse of the Soviet Union. One rare contribution came from V. N. Ponamarev who analyzed Russo-American relations during the Crimean War.⁶⁷ Alan Goutmann, a contemporary student of the Crimean War in France, made the most significant recent contribution on the French side.⁶⁸ Candan Badem is the first Turkish scholar to use the Western and Russian historiography along with Ottoman archival materials to evaluate the Ottoman role in the war.⁶⁹

No recent dissertations have successfully evaluated the modern Ottoman army.⁷⁰ Figen Taşkın's doctoral dissertation and Fatih Akyüz's Masters thesis discuss Ottoman logistics, but the subject matter still needs further elaboration.⁷¹ Erdoğan Keleş's dissertation offers little insight about Ottoman diplomacy and

⁶⁵ James J. Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire: Prelude to Collapse 1839-1878* (Stuttgart, 2000).

⁶⁶ Orlando Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* (London and New York, 2010). This work has been translated into Turkish as *Kırım. Son Haçlı Seferi* (İstanbul, 2012). In latest publication the book appeared with a different name, *The Crimean War: A History* (New York, 2011).

⁶⁷ V. N. Ponamarev, *Krymskaya voyna i Russko-Amerikanskoe otnoshenia* (Moscow, 1993).

⁶⁸ Alain Gouttman, *La guerre de Crimée* (Paris, 1995).

⁶⁹ Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853-1856)* (Leiden, 2010). His book is based on his PhD dissertation defended in 2007 at Sabancı University (İstanbul).

⁷⁰ Ayten Can Tunalı, *Tanzimat Döneminden Kara Ordusunda Yapılanma (1839-1876)*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Ankara University, 2003.

⁷¹ Figen Taşkın, "Kırım Harbi'nin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na Etkileri ve İase Sorunu", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, İstanbul University, 2007; Fatih Akyüz, "Kırım Savaşı'nın Lojistiği'nde İstanbul'un Yeri", Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Marmara University, 2006.

warfare.⁷² Andrew C. Rath's dissertation discusses the naval campaigns.⁷³

Dissertations prepared recently demonstrate that unstudied aspects of Crimean War historiography still exist. Republications of many memoirs, letters, and monographs prove that the Crimean War is still a fascinating topic for many people.

2.2. Blind Spots in the Literature

2.2.1. The Danube Front

Great academic effort has been employed to determine the origins of the war and the campaign in the Crimean peninsula, whereas military engagements in the Baltic, the White Sea, the Pacific and the Caucasus have been overlooked. The Danubian front is another aspect on which the Western sources provide, at most, some concise and superficial information. One exception is Archibald Paton's personal accounts.⁷⁴ An expert on the Balkans and Central Europe, Paton traveled along the Danube River during late 1853 when the war was about to start and conveyed his experiences concerning the Ottoman army and fortresses. Another important observer was Joseph Crowe, correspondent of *The Illustrated London News*.⁷⁵ Having settled in the towns along the Danube during the campaign, he dispatched letters and illustrations to London. These records of British officers also include interesting details regarding their camp life in Turkey and the performance of the Ottoman army.

⁷² Erdoğan Keleş, "Osmanlı, İngiltere ve Fransa İlişkileri Bağlamında Kırım Savaşı", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Ankara University, 2009. Incomprehensibly, throughout the dissertation he speaks of Island of Crimea (*Kırım Adası*).

⁷³ Andrew C. Rath, "The Global Dimensions of Britain and France's Crimean War Naval Campaigns against Russia, 1854-1856", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, McGill University, 2011.

⁷⁴ Archibald A. Paton, *The Bulgarian, the Turk and the German* (London, 1855).

⁷⁵ Sir Joseph Crowe, *Reminiscences of Thirty-Five Years of My Life* (London, 1895), pp. 111-150.

Spanish and Sardinian governments understandably assigned missions to the East to observe the changes in war technology and tactics and to improve relations with the sea powers and the Ottoman Empire. Spanish Queen Isabella II sent General Don Juan Prim with a large entourage to the seat of war in autumn 1853. His observations were presented to the Spanish government and published in 1855.⁷⁶ Godfrey Rhodes, a British officer who attended the Spanish mission as an honorary member, also penned his memories about traveling from Istanbul to the Danube River in a short description of the Ottoman military road to the Danube along with towns and fortifications in the Balkans.⁷⁷ The Sardinian government sent Captain Giuseppe Govone to the headquarters of Ömer Lütfi Pasha. His letters to General La Marmora also include important details about the Russo-Ottoman confrontation in the Balkans. Some of his papers later appeared in French in a biographical book edited by his son.⁷⁸

Using Ottoman and Russian materials is a necessity for researchers, who can learn little about the Danube Front from the Western sources. Egor Petrovich Kovalevskii, a famous Russian traveler, author, orientalist and diplomat, wrote the first monograph about military activities in the Balkans in 1853 and 1854.⁷⁹ The most important contribution to the subject matter thus far came from another General, Andrei Nikolaievich Petrov, who was one of the most productive officer-historians of Tsarist Russia.⁸⁰ The main deficiency of Petrov's study is its almost

⁷⁶ General Don Juan Prim, Comte de Reus, *Memoria sobre el viaje militar a oriente presentada al Gobierno de S.M* (Madrid, 1855)

⁷⁷ Captain G[odfrey] Rhodes, *A Personal Narrative of a Tour of Military Inspection in Various Parts of European Turkey* (London, 1854).

⁷⁸ General Govone, *Memoires (1848-1870)* (Paris, 1905).

⁷⁹ *Sobranie sochinenii Egora Petrovicha Kovalevskogo. Voina s Turtsiei i razryv c zapadnymi derzhavami v 1853 i 1854 godakh*, vol. II (St. Petersburg, 1871). In the same year before the death of the author this book was published anonymously.

⁸⁰ A. N. Petrov, *Voina Rossii s Turtsiei. Dunaiskaya kampania 1853 i 1854 gg.*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1890).

complete reliance on Russian sources. Histories of the Crimean War written by Bogdanovich, Zayonchkovskii, and Tarle also include detailed chapters on the Danubian theater. The Russian journal for the siege of the Silistre Fortress, which included all details of the Russian operations against Silistre, was appended to the work of Bogdanovich.⁸¹ It and Captain Butler's personal diary are useful documents for understanding the siege.

Captain James A. Butler and Lieutenant Charles Nasmyth, two British officers, played significant roles during the siege of Silistre. Both officers had previously served in the East India Company army. Butler left a journal that contains a daily account of the defense of Silistre from 11 May 1854 until 15 June 1854. He was incapable of writing after 15 June because he was wounded on 12 June and died ten days later. The journal is available in the National Army Museum in London.⁸² Fortunately, N. A. Woods, a war correspondent, included this valuable source in his book.⁸³ Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, a Turkish military historian, used Woods' book and translated the journal into Turkish.⁸⁴ Ahmed Muhtar Pasha's work will be described in greater detail below.

Memoirs of the Russian officers who served on the Danube provide valuable information about the Russian plans, strategies, and conduct of war. In this respect, memoirs of two Russian officers—Pyotr Kanonovich Menkov (1814-1875) and

⁸¹ "Zhurnal osadnykh deistvii protiv kreposti Silistrii v 1854-m gody", Bogdanovich, vol. II, *Prilozheniya*, pp. 10-62.

⁸² "Journal of Captain J. A. Butler at the Siege of Silistria, 1854", National Army Museum, London, 7402/129.

⁸³ N. A. Woods, *The Past Campaign. A Sketch of the War in the East* (London, 1855), vol. I, pp. 90-135.

⁸⁴ Ferik Ahmed Muhtar, *Kirim Sefer-i Meşhuru Evalindeki 1270 Osmanlı – Rus Tuna Seferi ve Bunun Nihayetindeki Silistre Müttafa-i Kahramannamesi* (Istanbul, 1922), pp. 112-185.

Pyotr Vladimirovich Alabin (1824-1896)—are of particular importance.⁸⁵ Menkov is famous as the first editor of military journal *Voennyi sbornik* and military newspaper *Russkii invalid*. Six years prior to this scholarly duty, as a lieutenant colonel in 1853, Menkov was assigned to the headquarters of General Gorchakov in Bucharest and worked for him in the Principalities and the Crimea. Most importantly, Menkov prepared the “journal of hostilities,” observing the military activities more carefully than many other staff officers. His memories were a harsh critique of the Russian army. These pages were published long after their author passed away. Alabin was a captain during the Crimean War and a participant in the battle at Oltenițe. He was also critical of the Russian army. The famous Russian novelist Lev Tolstoy, who was then a young Russian aristocrat, also served in the Russian army in front of Silistre. His letters to relatives are important for revealing aspects of military life and battles in the eyes of a young Russian nobleman.⁸⁶ Colonel Baumgarten, the Russian commander in the battle at Çatana, recorded in a daybook the movements of the Russian troops in the Little Wallachia.⁸⁷ General Nikolai Ushakov also recorded memories, including valuable observations about the Russian conduct of war on the Danube, particularly the passage of the Russian troops over the Danube River.⁸⁸

The Ottoman literature, not surprisingly, contains few personal accounts. Nonetheless, the memoirs of Michał Czajkowski (1804-1886), famous Polish romantic officer and man of letters, highlight the front from the perspective of an Ottoman commander. Czajkowski was a member of the Hotel Lambert, the Polish

⁸⁵ *Zapiski Petra Kanonavicha Menkova, Vol. I: Dunai i Nemtsy* (St. Petersburg, 1898); P. Alabin, *Chetyre voiny. Pohodnye zapiski v 1849, 1853, 1854-56 i 1877-78 godah, Part II. Vostochnaya voina 1853-1854 gg.* (Moscow, 1892).

⁸⁶ *Leo Tolstoy. His Life and Work*, vol. I (London, 1906)

⁸⁷ A[leksandr] K[arlovich] Baumgarten, “Dnevnik 1849, 1853, 1854 I 1855 gg.”, *Zhurnal Imperatorskogo Russkogo Voenno-Istoricheskogo Obshchestva*, no. 4-5 (1910), 1-2 (1911), St. Petersburg.

⁸⁸ N. I. Ushakov, “Zapiski ochevidtsa o voine Rossii protiv Turtsii i zapadnykh derzhav (1853-55)” in *Devyatnadtsaty vek: Istoricheskii sbornik*, vol. II, P. I. Bartenev (eds.) (Moscow, 1872), p. 66.

liberation organization. He accepted Islam and took the Muslim name Mehmed Sadık. He was assigned commander of the Cossack regiment of the Ottoman army. He had relationships with several Ottoman bureaucrats and non-Muslim figures. Czajkowski's memoirs were translated into Russian and printed in the famous Russian history journal *Russkaya starina*.⁸⁹ However, his detailed explanations of his activities in the Balkans during the Crimean War were only published in Polish.⁹⁰ He also collected interesting stories and his anecdotal recollections of his life in the Ottoman Empire in a small book, *Turetskie anekdoty* or Turkish anecdotes.⁹¹ His books include important details about Ottoman society in general and the Ottoman army and government in particular. Thus, their translations into Turkish would be a welcome contribution.

In the 1920s, General Ahmed Muhtar Pasha wrote the only Ottoman monograph on the Danubian theatre. Interestingly, this book is almost unknown to Turkish historians.⁹² The author was a general of artillery and wrote several books on military technology, art and history. In addition to Butler's journal, he used some French sources, Kovalevskii's book, the semi-official newspaper *Ceride-i Havadis* and some archival documents. Ahmed Muhtar Pasha's narrative ends abruptly after

⁸⁹ Memoirs could only be published in about ten years. *Russkaya starina*, "Zapiski Mikhaila Chaikovskogo", Vol. 84 (1895), pp. 161-184; Vol. 85 (1896), pp. 163-176, 381-394; Vol. 86 (1896), pp. 155-181, 391-405; Vol. 87 (1896), pp. 367-404, 647-659. Vol. 88 (1896), pp. 209-225, 653-676; Vol. 89 (1897), pp. 333-370; Vol. 90 (1897), pp. 381-404; Vol. 93 (1898), pp. 437-464, 651-681; Vol. 94 (1898), pp. 161-200, 423-453, 671-694; Vol. 95 (1898), pp. 197-231, 435-464, 651-685; Vol. 96 (1898), pp. 169-209, 451-468, 667-689; Vol. 102 (1900): 219-236; Vol. 103 (1900), pp. 201-224, 431-448; Vol. 104 (1900), pp. 219-236, 721-744; Vol. 118 (1904), pp. 699-715; Vol. 119 (1904), pp. 267-286, 628-642; Vol. 120 (1904), pp. 222-243, 558-594.

⁹⁰ Michal Czajkowski (Mehmed Sadyk Pasza), *Moje Wspomnienia o Wojnie 1854 Roku*, prepared by Josef Fijalek (Warsaw, 1962).

⁹¹ *Turetskie anekdoty. Iz tritsatiletikh vospominanii Mikhaila Chaikovskogo (Sadyk-pashi)* (Moscow, 1883).

⁹² Ferik Ahmed Muhtar, *Kirim Sefer-i Meşhuru Evalindeki 1270 Osmanlı – Rus Tuna Seferi ve Bunun Nihayetindeki Silistre Müdafaa-i Kahramannamesi* (Istanbul, 1922). He should not be confused with more famous Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha of the 1877-78 War who also wrote on military history.

he explains the Siege of Silistre in detail. Works by Kurtoğlu and Gürel also address the Danubian front, albeit briefly.

2.2.2. The Rival Armies

The documentation of the Russian military establishment paved way for a rich discourse of monographs Russian and Soviet military historians to develop. In this respect, Soviet historian Liubomir Beskrovnyi's studies are classic for understanding the reforms and general performance of the Russian army of the 18th and 19th centuries.⁹³ Recently, a group of American scholars, Bruce Menning, David Schimmelpennick van der Oye, and Frederick Kagan, have introduced details of the Russian military to Western scholarship.⁹⁴

The Turkish General Staff has always written most military history in Turkey.⁹⁵ American scholars Avigdor Levy and Stanford Shaw opened a path for researchers of the Ottoman military reformation.⁹⁶ Virginia Aksan, Rhoads Murphey, and Gábor Ágoston have already penned well-written analytical accounts of the Ottoman army from the 16th to 18th century. Despite numerous defects in the narrative, Virginia Aksan's latest book on the Ottoman warfare against two major

⁹³ L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Ocherki po istochnikovedeniiu voennoi istorii rossii* (Moscow, 1957); *Russkaya armiya i flot v XVIII veke. Ocherki* (Moscow, 1958); *Ocherki voennoi istoriografii rossii* (Moscow, 1962); *Russkaya armiya i flot v XIX veke. Voenno-ekonomicheskii potentsial Rossii* (Moscow, 1973); *Russkoe voennoe iskusstvo XIX v.* (Moscow, 1974); *Armiya i flot Rossii v nachale XX v. Ocherki voenno-ekonomicheskogo potentsiala* (Moscow, 1986).

⁹⁴ Bruce Menning, *Bayonets before Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army, 1861-1914* (Bloomington, 2000); *Reforming the Tsar's Army: Military Innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution*, ed. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce W. Menning (Cambridge, 2011); *The Military History of Tsarist Russia*, ed. Frederick W. Kagan and Robin Higham (New York, 2002)

⁹⁵ *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi*, vol. III, part 5 (1793-1908) (Ankara, 1978); [Hikmet Süer], *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi: Osmanlı Devri Osmanlı-Rus Kırımlı Harbi Kafkas Cephesi Harekâtı* (1853-1856) (Ankara, 1986)

⁹⁶ Avigdor Levy, "The Military Policy of Sultan Mahmud II, 1808-1839", Unpublished PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1968; Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New, The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III 1789-1807* (Cambridge, 1971).

rivals of the empire, the Habsburgs and the Russians, in the 18th and 19th centuries is the only compact monograph on the subject.⁹⁷ A new generation of Ottoman scholars has emerged whose works describe various aspects of the Ottoman army and wars. For example, Tobias Heinzelmann and Gültekin Yıldız have published their doctoral researches discussing the process of founding the Ottoman standing army based on the Western model.⁹⁸ Mesud Uyar and Edward J. Erickson's book is a good introduction to the Ottoman army and wars throughout six centuries.⁹⁹ Sources provide only fragmentary information on the *Tanzimat* army, which needs further research and elaboration.¹⁰⁰

Although studies on the Ottoman military have improved, the deficiency of the Russian materials is a significant handicap. The comparative studies and cross-checking by working in different archives are still lacking in the Ottoman and Russian military history. Because the Ottoman army appeared weak compared to the Russian army, few comparative studies were conducted, and historians must now verify facts by working in different archives, particularly in Russian and Turkish collections.

⁹⁷ Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (Harlow, 2007); Gábor Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge, 2005).

⁹⁸ Tobias Heinzelmann, *Cihaddan Vatan Savunmasına: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Genel Askerlik Yükümlülüğü, 1826-1856*, translated by Türkis Noyan (İstanbul, 2009); Gültekin Yıldız, *Neferin Adı Yok. Zorunlu Askerlige Geçiş Sürecinde Osmanlı Devleti'nde Siyaset, Ordu ve Toplum 1826-1839* (İstanbul, 2009).

⁹⁹ Edward J. Erickson, Mesut Uyar, *A Military History of the Ottomans from Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara, Denver, and Oxford, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, Ferik Mahmud Şevket, *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kıyafet-i Askeriyyesi*, vol. II (Ankara, 2010), pp. 7-19; A. Tevfik Gürel, *1853-55 Türk-Rus ve Müttefiklerinin Kırım Savaşı* (İstanbul, 1935), pp. 7-14; [Hikmet Süer], pp. 33-40; Yüzbaşı Fevzi [Kurtoğlu], *1853-1855 Türk-Rus Harbi, Kırım Seferi* (İstanbul, 1927), pp. 7-9; Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, p. 159; M. I. Bogdanovich, *Vostochnaya voyna 1853-56 gg.*, vol. I, *Prilozheniya*, (St. Petersburg, 1876), pp. 21-26; George Dodd, *Pictorial History of the Russian War 1854-5-6* (Edinburgh and London, 1856), p. 27; Xavier Heuschling, *L'Empire de Turquie* (Brussels and Paris, 1860); Georg Klab, *Handbuch der vergleichenden Statistik der Völkersuzdans and Staatenkunde* (Zürich, 1857); Ziya Şakir, *Tanzimat Devrinden Sonra Osmanlı Nizam Ordusu Tarihi* (İstanbul, 1957); Necati Taşan, "Tanzimat ve ordu", *Tanzimat*, vol. I (İstanbul, 1999).

2.2.3. The Individual in the War: Peasant, Prisoner, Spy, and Emigrant

The Crimean War has generally been explained as an issue of high politics, concentrating only the actions of the decision makers and the high commanders in the field. In fact, the individual personalities of the Ottoman military and civil high officials who participated in the Crimean War have only been discussed recently.¹⁰¹ Peasants and privates have consciously or unconsciously been ignored or neglected in narratives of the war. One of the reasons of the neglect is the lack of sources. Because almost no written accounts by the common people, Muslim or non-Muslim, have appeared, it is difficult to discuss their attitudes about the warfare. Diseases in the British and French armies in the Ottoman Empire and the Crimea were discussed in the literature but only as a failure of army logistics rather than as a challenging human experience that affected the physical and psychological state of individuals. Neither relations between the common people and the ordinary soldiers, nor the effects of warfare on individuals have ever been adequately discussed. The historiography has either overlooked the motives and activities of Balkan people during the Crimean War or discussed Balkan people only in the context of relations between the military and local population with a bias toward covering the atrocities, lootings, killings and other violent deeds perpetrated by the military. Thus, the relations between the army and peasants should be discussed in greater depth to understand the national movements in the Balkans and population movements, whether forced or voluntary. Another important social aspect of warfare is its

¹⁰¹ Badem discusses the corruption in the Ottoman bureaucracy and army, and the fractions in the Ottoman governing circles between those people who wanted to secure their own positions and incomes in expense of others. See, *Ottoman Crimean War*.

economic repercussions. Although some people became richer in wartime, others became poorer.

These effects of the Russo-Ottoman wars on the Ottoman and Russian populations all deserve the attention of historians. The few studies that focus on the Balkan population during the Crimean War have been produced by scholars in the region. Kofas evaluates Greek foreign policy during the Crimean War.¹⁰² Florescu highlights the role of the Principalities in Russo-Ottoman relations and in European diplomacy.¹⁰³ Barbara Jelavich, author of many books and articles on 19th century Balkan politics, has written chapters on Bulgaria and the Principalities during the Crimean War.¹⁰⁴ Maria Todorova, another important scholar of the Balkans, illuminates the role of the Balkan volunteers in the Russian army.¹⁰⁵ There is still a need for a monograph that comprehensively discusses the people in the Balkan region during the Russo-Ottoman confrontations.

The prisoners of the Russo-Ottoman wars have consistently been overlooked by military and social histories. A literature in Russian has recently emerged, although no studies have been published in any other language.¹⁰⁶ Only one

¹⁰² Jon V. Kofas, *Greece during the Crimean War* (New York, 1980).

¹⁰³ Radu R. Florescu, *The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities: A Problem in Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy 1821-1854* (Jassy, 1997); Radu R. Florescu “The Rumanian Principalities and the Origins of the Crimean War”, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 43, no. 100 (1964), pp. 46-67.

¹⁰⁴ Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878* (Cambridge, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ Maria Todorova, “The Greek Volunteers in the Crimean War”, *Balkan Studies*, vol. 25 (1984), pp. 539-563.

¹⁰⁶ B[oris] P[avlovich] Milovidov, “Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny”, *Vestnik molodykh uchionykh*, no. 5 (2002), pp. 28-36; “Inostrannye voennoplennye i rossiiskoe obshchestvo v gody Krymskoi voiny”, *Rossiyskaya istoriya*, no. 5 (2010), pp. 153-164; O[leg] Shkedy, “O turetskikh voennoplennyykh v Rossii vo vremya Krymskoi voiny”, *Military Krym*, no. 9 (2008), pp. 23-25; V. V. Poznakhirev, “Turetskie voennoplennye v Kurskoi gubernii v period Krymskoi voiny 1853-56 gg”, *Kurskii krai. Nauchno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 126 (2010), pp. 32-39. V. A. Bessonov, “Chislennost i sostav voennoplennyykh Krymskoi voiny 1853-1856 gg. v Kaluzhskoi gubernii”, in *Voprosy arheologii istorii, kultury i prirody Verhnego Poochya: Materialy XI vserossiyskoi nauchnoi konferentsii 5-7 aprelya 2005 goda* (Kaluga, 2005), pp. 151-154; “Voennoplenyye Krymskoi voiny 1853-1856 v Kaluzhskoi gubernii”, *Trudy regionalnogo konkursa nauchnykh proektor v oblasti*

monograph addresses espionage activities.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, chapters in this study about the prisoners of war and espionage would fill some important gaps in the historiography.¹⁰⁸ The recollections of the British prisoners held by Russia convey significant information that compensates for the lack of Ottoman accounts. The intelligence activities of both armies on the Danube are discussed based on materials from the Russian and Turkish military archives. Military intelligence of both armies still needs further elaboration; changes that occurred throughout the nineteenth century and intelligence successes and failures in various Russo-Ottoman encounters should be discussed.

Population movements were one social outcome of the Russo-Ottoman wars. The changing boundaries of the two empires led the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire to immigrate to Russia, whereas the Muslims of the lost territories left their homeland to live in Ottoman Empire. Such population movements from the

gumanitarnykh nauk, no. 7 (Kaluga, 2006), pp. 51-63. For more general studies on the prisoners of war of the 19th century Russo-Ottoman wars, see, V.V. Poznakhirev, "Kurskaya guberniya i Turetskie voennoplennye voyn XIX veka", *Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Seriya Istoryya. Politologiya. Ekonomika. Informatika*, no. 17 (2011), pp. 151- 155; "Evolyutsiya polozheniya Turetskikh voennoplennnykh v Rossii v kontse XVII – nachale XX v.", *Elektronnyi nauchnyi zhurnal Kurskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta*, no. 19 (2011), <http://scientific-notes.ru/pdf/021-015.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen M. Harris, *British Intelligence in the Crimean War 1854-1856* (London, 1999). There is not yet much academic effort employed to understand the Russian military intelligence in the 19th century. M[ikhail] Alekseev, *Voennaya razvedka Rossii ot Riurika do Nikolaya II*, vol. I (Moscow, 1998); E[vgenii] M. Primakov (ed.), *Ocherki istorii rossiiskoi vneshnei razvedki*, vol. I (Moscow, 1996); P. P. Cherkasov, *Russkii agent vo Frantsii. Yakov Nikolayevich Tolstoi* (Moscow, 2008); A. Kolpakidi, A. Sever, *Spetsluzhby Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Moscow, 2010); E. A. Laptev, *Rossiiskii diplomat Naiden Gerov i rossiisko-bulgarskoe sviazi (1853-1870 gody)* (Ufa, 2011); O[leg] A[leksandrovich] Gokov, "Rossiyskaya voennaya razvedka v Bolgarii v 1856-1878 gg.", *Drinovski sbornik*, vol. II (2008), pp. 152-160; David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, "Military Intelligence" in *Encyclopaedia of Russian History* (New York, 2003), pp. 933-934; idem, "Reforming Russian Military Intelligence" in *Reforming the Tsar's Army*, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce Menning (eds.) (New York, 2003), pp. 133-151. For domestic intelligence in the Ottoman Empire in *Tanzimat* period, see, Cengiz Kirli, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu: Osmanli Modernleşme Sürecinde "Havadis Jurnalleri" (1840-1844)* (Istanbul, 2009); idem, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Empire", in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (eds.) (Brill, 2004).

¹⁰⁸ A slightly different version of the chapter on the military intelligence will soon be published in *Middle Eastern Studies* with a title "Shpion vs. Casus: Ottoman and Russian Intelligence in the Balkans during the Crimean War (1853-56)". An in depth analysis of the Ottoman prisoners of war in Russia, which has been discussed in this dissertation will be published in Turkish in the journal *Belleten*.

Crimean peninsula and the Caucasus peaked after the Crimean War in the 1860s and continued until the demise of both empires. The literature on wartime emigration has recently flourished.¹⁰⁹ However, issues such as the causes and effects of migrations from/to the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Crimea throughout the 19th century still require further research.

2.3. The Archival Sources

Britain was the first state to publish official documents about the Crimean War on a large scale. *Parliamentary Debates*¹¹⁰, *the Annual Register*¹¹¹ and *Sessional Papers* (or *Accounts and Papers*)¹¹² are useful for explaining diplomacy and military affairs. Significant Crimean War documents also appeared in German as early as 1855.¹¹³ However, the best collection of documents has only recently been published. Winfried Baumgart has published archival materials on the Crimean War for several

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of the attitude of the Crimean Tatars towards the Allied powers and the Russian oppressive measures against the Crimean Tatars, see Mara Kozelsky, “Casualties of Conflict: Crimean Tatars during the Crimean War”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (2008), pp. 866-891; Hakan Kirimli, “Emigrations from the Crimea to the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 5 (2008), pp. 751-773.

¹¹⁰ Great Britain. *Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, vols. 127-132 (London, 1853-54).

¹¹¹ *The Annual Register* (1853 and 1854), vols. 95 and 96 (London, 1854-1855).

¹¹² Great Britain, House of Commons. “Communications Respecting Turkey Made to Her Majesty’s Government by the Emperor of Russia” (*Eastern Papers*, Part V), *Sessional Papers*, 1854, vol. 71 (London, 1854); “Correspondence Respecting the Rights and Privileges of the Latin and Greek Churches in Turkey” (*Eastern Papers*, Parts I-III, VII), *Sessional Papers*, 1854, vol. 71 (London, 1854); “Instructions of the British and French Governments for the Joint Protection of British and French Subjects and Commerce” (*Eastern Papers*, Part IV), *Sessional Papers*, vol. 71 (London, 1854); “Memorandum by Count Nesselrode, June 1844” (*Eastern Papers*, Part VI); Correspondence Respecting the Relations between Greece and Turkey [March 1853- May 1854], *Sessional Papers*, vol. 72 (London 1854); *Accounts and Papers*, “Army and Navy”, vol. IX [3 February – 21 March 1857].

¹¹³ J[ulius] von Jasmund, *Aktenstücke zur orientalischen frage*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1855-1859).

decades, a long-term project that yielded 12 colossal volumes, containing Austrian, Prussian, British, and French documents.¹¹⁴

The papers of John Fox Burgoyne, Frederick Sayer and William Fenwick Williams, the defender of the Kars fortress, were published soon after the Crimean War.¹¹⁵ During World War II, the British navy compiled three volumes of correspondence from its naval campaigns.¹¹⁶ The first Russian publication of official materials on the Crimean War was a collection of diplomatic and military correspondence of the Russian Empire during the war.¹¹⁷ Zayonchkovskii made the major contribution from the Russian archives at the turn of the 20th century. Ali Fuat Türkeldi prepared a three-volume book of materials from the Ottoman Archives, which was later edited and published.¹¹⁸ The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry recently published an archival edition about the Crimean War.¹¹⁹

This dissertation is primarily based on Ottoman, Russian and British archival sources. The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry (BOA) in Istanbul and the Military Archives (ATASE) in Ankara, which have been used extensively in researching this dissertation, preserve documents that are valuable for evaluating the modernizing Ottoman army and the Crimean War. Relevant Russian archival

¹¹⁴ Winfried Baumgart, *Österreichische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, 3 vols. (München, 1979-1980); *Preussische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, 2 vols. (München, 1990-1991); *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, 4 vols. (München, 1988-2006); *Französische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, 3 vols. (München, 1999-2003).

¹¹⁵ [Frederick] Sayer, *Despatches and Papers Relative to the Campaign in Turkey, Asia Minor, and the Crimea* (London, 1857); *The Military Opinions of General Sir John Fox Burgoyne*, ed. G. Wrottesley (London, 1859); *The Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, ed. F. A. Wellesley, 2 vols. (London, 1873).

¹¹⁶ *Russian War, 1854: Baltic and Black Sea Official Correspondence*, edited by D. Bonner-Smith and A. C. Dewar (London, 1943); *Russian War, 1855: Black Sea Official Correspondence*, edited by A. C. Dewar (London, 1945).

¹¹⁷ *Sobranie donezenii o voennyykh deistviyakh i diplomaticeskikh bumag i aktov, otnosiashchikhsia do voiny 1853, 1854, 1855 i 1856 godov* (St. Petersburg, 1858).

¹¹⁸ Ali Fuat Türkeldi, *Mesail-i Mühimme-i Siyasiyye*, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara, 1957). This book was republished in 1987.

¹¹⁹ *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kırım Savaşı 1853-1856* (Ankara, 2006).

materials are scattered throughout several archives. The Russian State History Archive (RGIA) and the Russian State Archive on the Military Naval-Fleet (RGAVMF) in St. Petersburg and the Russian State Military History Archive (RGVIA) and the Archive of Foreign Affairs of Russian Empire (AVPRI) in Moscow possess numerous materials relevant to my subject. Unfortunately, I was unable to access the AVPRI and RGAVMF.¹²⁰ I also conducted some research in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) and the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RGADA), which also preserve some files concerning the Crimean War.

A register of military orders is useful for understanding army life in the Ottoman headquarters in Şumnu.¹²¹ A journal of Ottoman military affairs is helpful for following the activities of the Ottoman army throughout the war.¹²² Checklists of the Ottoman battalions in the ATASE archives are also crucial for explaining the Ottoman force numbers, casualties, and recruits. However, restricted access to the materials prevents utilizing them sufficiently. Although the modernization of the Ottoman army and bureaucracy can be traced in documentary production because modernization was an ongoing process, and Ottoman army lists or registers appear superficial compared to European army records.

¹²⁰ For the Ottoman related funds in the Russian archives, see, Özhan Kapıcı and İbrahim Köremezli “Osmanlı Askerî Tarihçiliğinin Eksik Aynası: Rusya Federasyonu Arşivleri”, *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihini Araştırmak: Yeni Yaklaşımlar Yeni Kaynaklar*, ed. Cevat Şayin and Gültekin Yıldız (İstanbul, 2012), pp. 130-155.

¹²¹ Genelkurmay Askerî Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı Arşivi [Archive of the Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies of the Turkish General Staff], Ankara, Crimean War Collection (hereafter ATASE), “Şumnu. *Günlük emir rapor kayıt defteri*”, k. 9, d. 5.

¹²² *Kırım Harbi Hakkında Bir Ruznâme*, Library of Turkish Historical Association (Ankara). It is not actually a *ruznâme* (a daily record) of the Ottoman army, but a register of the major military encounters. Keleş claims that he could not locate the author of the work. Actually, it is not a book to be penned by an author, but only a register written by clerks.

The Russian army prepared more specific and detailed records about army personnel, which it printed. The orders (*prikazy*) issued in the armies included information about all major developments, i.e., accounts of battles and other military activities, personnel assignments and promotions, health conditions, casualties and deserters.¹²³ The lists in the Russian archives, about the army units, prisoners, and supply activities were more detailed than similar Ottoman documents, but not necessarily more accurate. One important file from the Russian archives I used is the unfinished recollections of Mikhail D. Gorchakov, the commander in chief of the Russian army in the Balkans and later, the Crimea.¹²⁴

In Great Britain, the National Archives (TNA, formerly the Public Record Office) possesses rich sources about the Crimean War, in particular under the Foreign Office and War Office. This dissertation used some Foreign Office documents to explain Allied army movements in Ottoman territory, the diplomatic proceedings and the war itself.

2.4. Access to Materials: Personal Experiences and Recent Developments

Numerous books that were previously difficult to access were recently digitized. Several Internet sites and libraries now offer valuable Crimean War resources in their online databases. Websites such as Google Books, Archive.org, Runivers.ru, and Rsl.ru offer researchers rich collections of digitized books.

¹²³ See, for instance, “*Prikaz voiskom po 3-go, 4-go i 5-go pekhotnykh korpusov*” in 1854, and “*Prikazy po iuzhnoi armii*” in 1855 and 1856.

¹²⁴ “*Zapiski Gorchakova M. D. o Krymskoi voine, 1857 g.*”, Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Russian Federation State Archive], Moscow (hereafter GARF), f. 728, op. 1 part 2, d. 2518 (hereafter “*Zapiski Gorchakova*”). To the best of my knowledge it has never been used before. There are one French and two Russian versions of the memoirs in one file, and the second Russian version was dated as 1860. Gorchakov died in 1861, and he apparently could not have time to complete his “Notes”.

Newspapers from the 19th century can be read and downloaded online via various providers. For instance, the Library of Hakkı Tarık Us provides free digital copies of most Ottoman Turkish newspaper material. Thus, fortunately for students of Ottoman and Russian history, many books that I previously copied or photographed in difficult conditions are now available online. New digital libraries appear every day in the Information Age, so researchers must be careful to locate virtual sources before visiting a library or an archive.

CHAPTER III

THE OTTOMAN ORIGINS REVISITED: WAR ON WORDS, WAR FOR WORDS

3.1. Introduction

For a century and a half, scholars have debated the origins of the Crimean War from different perspectives: The Tsar's desire for further aggrandizement, British politicians' desire to check Russian military superiority over the Ottoman Empire, the French Emperor's cunning maneuvers to dismantle the Vienna system, the Porte's oriental manners and intrigues during the diplomatic crisis, and Austria's rush to preserve the European peace have composed major themes in the literature. In this regard, politicians' moves and countermoves have been carefully analyzed to determine which individual is most to blame: Nicholas II, Napoleon III, Abdülmecid I or Stratford Redcliffe? The traditional approach to explaining the origins of the war is to find a scapegoat. However, neither a specific architect of the war nor a specific origin has been agreed upon. The prestige and honor of the Emperors, distrust between diplomats, misunderstandings between decision-makers, and even the backwardness of communication (there was no telegraphic line connecting the European capitals, so most diplomatic correspondence required more than a week to

arrive at its destination) all played roles in paving the way for European war. Thus, many interconnected causes led to the war, and a search for the most significant one is futile and unnecessary. What is clear is that European diplomacy could not manage the crisis, and the Great Powers found themselves in an increasingly hostile environment, even as all were reluctant to wage war.

Ottoman diplomacy has been treated in different ways in the literature. A split in the Ottoman government, between the conservative war party and the reformist pacifists, has often been advanced to explain Ottoman decision-making during the Crimean War. However, this is merely a caricature of Ottoman politics and cannot explain many decisions taken by the Porte during the crisis. Some historians have observed the Ottoman Empire merely as a setting and subject of diplomacy rather than as an actor itself. This is partly true. The Ottoman Empire was in decline and had difficulty defending its own territories against its northern neighbor. While the lands of the Ottoman Empire, particularly Istanbul, were in jeopardy, there was rivalry among the European powers to assert greater influence over the Porte. The Porte, however, showed itself as an actor in European politics by rejecting the Vienna note and declaring war when the great powers were opposed. Some other historians have viewed the Porte as an inefficient, corrupt, and irrational oriental government that was not and could not be involved European diplomacy. For European observers, the most salient characteristic of Istanbul was intrigue, treachery, and bribery. The Ottoman bureaucrats pursued only their own profits without consideration of the best interests of the state and society. However, the Ottoman government pursued a consistent foreign policy indicating that state interests could be pursued, despite frequent ministerial changes.

This chapter focuses mainly on the Ottoman origins of the Crimean War. The primary argument is that the Porte was a rational player during the diplomatic crisis and the Crimean War, in its evaluation of European politics, its assessment of Russian demands, and its pursuit of the interests of the Ottoman state. The Ottoman government can also be viewed as a participant in European politics, at least with respect to the Eastern Question. In all diplomatic initiatives intended to resolve the diplomatic crisis between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, the Porte made final decisions only after careful calculation of the limits of support of the naval powers and probable material losses after concessions to the Russians. The rival political perspectives and motives of specific Ottoman bureaucrats will not be discussed here; rather, a common state policy pursued before and during the Crimean War will be sought. Thus, after summarizing the diplomatic activities surrounding this episode, with special emphasis on the role of the Ottoman government, this chapter discusses whether the Ottoman Empire was a rational and skilled player in European politics or merely provided a setting for political rivalry in Europe.

3.2 Dispute over the Holy Lands

After the Treaty of Edirne (Adrianople) in 1829 and through crisis of the Polish and Hungarian émigrés in 1848, there was no diplomatic rupture of importance between the Russian and Ottoman Empires. The Ottoman government tried to preserve peaceful relations with Russia due to its relative weakness, seeking to promote its internal reforms known as *Tanzimat*. In 1848, the Porte consented to the Russian invasion of Wallachia. However, in the following year when the Porte did not return the Polish and Hungarian refugees who fought for the Hungarian cause

against the Habsburgs, it risked war with both Austria and Russia. Nevertheless, the refugee crisis was peacefully resolved via European diplomacy. It was an important diplomatic victory for the Porte against the two major European powers. From 1850 to 1853, the Porte, now assumed a conciliatory tone in seeking to resolve the crisis of Holy Places with France and Russia. However, in 1853, having secured the support of the naval powers, i.e., Britain and France, the Porte once again stood steadfast against Russian demands, and war could not be avoided.

The prelude to the Crimean War was a dispute between Orthodox and Catholic believers in the Holy Places of Palestine. The holy sites of Christianity were carefully divided between adherents of various Christian beliefs who guarded their portions jealously. Disagreements that arose from time to time between the various Christian branches regarding the shrines in and around Jerusalem revived once again in 1850. Slade summarizes the crisis in a colorful way: “It seems very like fiction, but it is true, that a key, a porter, and a star were the elements out of which grew the late eventful war with Russia.”¹²⁵ A local affair transformed in time into a matter of prestige and influence between two great powers of the time, Russia and France. Louise Napoleon, who would be enthroned as the French Emperor Napoleon III in 1852, aimed to consolidate his power in France and increase French influence in the Near East. Accordingly, he voluntarily initiated a crisis over the Christian sanctuaries of Jerusalem. On 28 May 1850, General Jacques Aupick, the French attaché military to Istanbul, conveyed a letter demanding the full application of the 33rd article of the 1740 Agreement.¹²⁶ The article concerned the rights and privileges of the Catholics

¹²⁵ Slade, *Turkey and the Crimean War*, p. 75.

¹²⁶ General Aupick to Aali Pasha, Pera, 28 May 1850, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, p. 4. For the articles regarding the religious capitulations of 1740 and their English translation, see *Eastern Papers*, Part I, pp. 5- 7. Türkgeldi quoted the document incorrectly, in a way that suggests that the 13th article of the

in the Holy Places, rights and privileges that were not fully observed following the French Revolution. Specifically, General Aupick asked for the return of nine sanctuaries that the Greeks were then using.

Russia, however, viewed any concession to France as a loss of its political influence in Istanbul and a great blow to Russian policy in the Ottoman lands. The French demand, if accepted, would certainly cause a deterioration in Russo-Ottoman relations, and thus, the question was not religious or legal but political from the very beginning. Stratford Canning was right in his first observations. “General Aupick has assured me that the matter in dispute is a mere question of property, and of express treaty stipulation. But it is difficult to separate any such question from political considerations; and a struggle of general influence, especially if Russia, as may be expected should interfere in behalf of the Greek Church, will probably grow out of the impending discussion.”¹²⁷

General Aupick and his successor, Charles de Lavalette maintained that the stipulations of the former treaties could not be questioned, while Vladimir Pavlovich Titov, the Russian chargé d’affairs in Istanbul, defended the necessity of preserving the status quo. The Russians even threatened the Sublime Porte with a rupture of diplomatic relations if there were any changes. In fact, throughout the crisis, the Russian government would never agree to a middle ground, and thus, there was no sufficient space for diplomatic maneuver. The Porte, on the one hand, assured the Russians that the rights of the Greeks would be preserved, and on the other hand, assured the French that this concession would be clarified. However, it was nearly

treaty was the issue. Ali Fuat Türkeldi, *Mesâil-i Mühimme-i Siyâsiyye*, vol. I, prepared by Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara, 1987), p. 2.

¹²⁷ Stratford Canning to Viscount Palmerston, Constantinople, 20 May 1850, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, p. 1.

impossible to satisfy both parties. In June 1850, Stratford Canning informed Lord Palmerston, “The Porte is fully aware of the important political considerations involved... It will probably be slow to commit itself to a conclusive answer...”¹²⁸ He was right. The Porte moved slowly and ignored the problem as long as possible to resolve it in the future in a more favorable international environment. Accordingly, Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha, then Foreign Minister, avoided taking responsibility for a decision and postponed an answer.

In December 1850, as a result of French pressure, the Porte at last proposed a mixed commission to examine the question and determine the rights of each party. The commission was composed of two French officials, an Ottoman Greek and a Muslim. After several meetings, Nicholas I, convinced that the commission would settle the issue in favor of the French, wanted its dissolution. The Porte, under Russian pressure, then named a commission composed only of Muslim members, such as *ulema* (Muslim theologians and scholars), certain *Müşirs*, distinguished men of law, and other significant personages. Sadık Rıfat Pasha, a prominent bureaucrat of the Ottoman reformation (*Tanzimat*), chaired the new commission. The commission, after examining all previous documents relating to the Holy Places and seeking a safer resolution, issued its decision on 25 January 1852. Two of the French demands were accepted: Catholics would freely enter and worship in the Holy Virgin’s Shrine in Jerusalem, and the keys of the Great Church of Bethlehem would be handed to them. As compensation, Greeks were allowed to perform in the Cupola

¹²⁸ Stratford Canning to Viscount Palmerston, Constantinople, 5 June 1850, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, p. 2.

of Ascension (a mosque situated on the Mount of Olives) with other Christian sects.¹²⁹

This arrangement, which appeared to satisfy both parties, was sanctioned by a convention (*sened*) delivered to the Catholics and by a *ferman* delivered to the Greeks.¹³⁰ After Russian complaints, the Porte ordered that the *ferman* be read in the presence of the Pasha, *Müfti*, *Kadi*, and Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem. In so doing, the Porte offended the French Ambassador, who had asked that the *ferman* should merely be registered. Moreover, the *ferman* declared that the present state of the gates of the Church of Bethlehem would not be changed, but this contradicted the document given to France. In the summer of 1852, the French fleet made a naval demonstration before Trabulus (Tripoli), and a blockade of the Dardanelles by the French was under discussion. Under pressure from both France and Russia, the Porte made contradictory promises and concessions.¹³¹ In the autumn of 1852, all Ottoman efforts were futile, and eventually the Porte antagonized both parties. Massive diplomatic efforts to settle the diplomatic crisis regarding the rights and the privileges of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire in the Holy Lands did not bear fruit. It was now clear that resolution of the council would cause a deterioration in relations with one of the great powers.

France, again a Napoleonic Empire, took a conciliatory stand through the end of 1852. However, the Russian mood in late 1852 was completely different. In December 1852, several councils, summoned to decide how to proceed, confirmed

¹²⁹ Goldfrank, p. 85.

¹³⁰ For the French original and English translation of the *sened*, see, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, pp. 36-38, and for the *ferman*, see, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, pp. 39-42.

¹³¹ "...eğerçi tarafeyne icra olunan mevâid yalnız bu anahtar maddesinde birbirine muhalif olarak bunun asıl sebebi iki tarafın dahi mütesâviyen Devlet-i Aliyye'yi iz'ac ve tahvif ile vuku' bulan cebirleri", *Mesâil*, vol. I, "The Resolution (*Mazbata*) of Council of Ministers regarding the Holy Places in Jerusalem", pp. 239-253.

that the 1740 Treaty gave France a right to a key to the Church of Bethlehem. Ozerov, the Russian chargé d'affairs, reported that fear of France in Istanbul was greater than fear of Russia.¹³² He further argued that “a heroic remedy was necessary” to re-establish Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire.¹³³ Nicholas I wished to use the religious dispute to restore, if not increase, Russian influence over the Porte. At the end of the year, Russia massed troops on the border of the Ottoman Empire. Russian diplomacy would be supported by a demonstration of military force. In the formulation of Goldfrank, Nicholas I prepared for a war “over religious symbols, an untenable concept of the status quo in a changing world, a manufactured insult, and foggy claims of tutelage over the Sultan’s Orthodox subjects.”¹³⁴

3.3 An Extraordinary Mission: Prince Menshikov at Istanbul

While the Ottoman government sought to resolve the question of the Holy Places, another crisis erupted with Austria over the disturbances in Montenegro. Austria responded to Ömer Lütfi Pasha’s military operation in Montenegro with a military demonstration and a threat of war. Meanwhile, Field Marshall Count Christian von Leiningen was sent to Istanbul to convince the Porte of the grave consequences of the Ottoman operation in Montenegro if it did not cease. He presented an ultimatum on 3 February 1853 and threatened to leave Istanbul if Austrian demands were not met. Neither the military measures nor the representation of Count Leiningen were sufficient to frighten the Porte, but Russian support for Austria forced the Ottomans to retreat. The Ottomans agreed to evacuate

¹³² Goldfrank, p. 105.

¹³³ Goldfrank, p. 108.

¹³⁴ Goldfrank, pp. 110-111.

Montenegro. The Leiningen mission was an example for Russia of a diplomatic success achieved through coercive diplomacy.¹³⁵

In late 1852, Russia prepared to send a mission to Istanbul. The candidates were Count Alexei Fedorovich Orlov, Head of the Secret Police and the architect of the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty, and Count Pavel Dmitrievich Kiselyov, brother of the then ambassador to Paris, but Nicholas I named a soldier, Admiral Aleksandr Sergeyevich Menshikov.¹³⁶ The mission, which was officially announced on 4 February, was delayed for a few weeks because of Menshikov's illness. Before his arrival at Istanbul, Menshikov visited the Russian army in Bessarabia and the Russian fleet in Sevastopol. His large entourage included Artur Adamovich Nepokoichitskii, the Chief of Staff of the 5th Army in Bessarabia, Admiral Vladimir Alekseievich Kornilov, the Chief of Staff of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, and Count Dmitrii Nesselrode, the son of the Russian Chancellor.¹³⁷

On 28 February 1853, Menshikov came to Istanbul on the steam frigate *Gromonosets* (Thunderer) as an extraordinary ambassador. He was greeted by the local Orthodox population, some of whom acted as if their savior had arrived.¹³⁸ In Bazancourt's words, by the mission of Prince Menshikov "the religious question is at an end; the political question begins."¹³⁹ The question was political from the very beginning, but the mission showed that the political crisis was deepening.

According to diplomatic custom, a new ambassador should make his first visit to the Grand Vizier and his second to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. However, the

¹³⁵ Schroeder, p. 27.

¹³⁶ Tarle, vol. I, p. 159.

¹³⁷ Tarle, vol. I, pp. 165-166.

¹³⁸ Tarle, vol. I, p. 166.

¹³⁹ Bazancourt, p. xx.

Prince refused to visit Fuad Efendi, the Ottoman foreign minister known to be Francophile, to force him to resign. The Prince's every act in Istanbul was rude and undiplomatic, thereby deliberately escalating the crisis. His very presence in Istanbul resulted in panic and instability in the Ottoman government. The Grand Vizier, the Foreign Minister, and the *Serasker* were replaced with individuals more favorable to the Russians.

In addition to the open demand to resolve the Holy Lands issue in favor of Orthodox believers, Nicholas I had a secret agenda. Through this mission, he wished to sign a secret treaty with the Ottoman government to consolidate his influence in Istanbul and guarantee it for the future. According to the Russian proposal, if the Ottoman Empire ever required aid against any power, Russia would put its fleet and army at its disposal. Menshikov further stated that secrecy must be maintained; otherwise, he would immediately leave Istanbul.¹⁴⁰ The Russian plan failed at the beginning of the mission when the Porte made it public. Afterwards, Menshikov pursued victory in the Holy Places question through the return of the disputed key, and, more importantly, he sought to guarantee Russian protective rights over the Orthodox population. The first goal was soon attained through French concessions, but the second demand appeared impossible to satisfy the Porte. The Russians, however, were determined to have the Porte sign a document guaranteeing their religious influence over the Ottoman Greeks.

The Menshikov Mission was not only a diplomatic initiative, but an act of reconnaissance for possible armed conflict. Admiral Kornilov examined the Straits to determine whether a successful landing in Istanbul was feasible. Kornilov even visited Athens, most likely to consolidate friendly relations between Greece and

¹⁴⁰ M. Doria to Colonel Rose, Constantinople, 1 April 1853, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, p. 112.

Russia at a juncture when relations between Russia and the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire were under discussion. As Saab claims, “The Kornilov mission underlined Russian influence at Athens and the whole affair confirmed convictions that any trouble with Russia was likely to unleash fighting in the provinces bordering on Greece.”¹⁴¹ Thus, the revolt of the Greeks in Thessaly and Epirus one year later was unsurprising.

The Russian demands were based on a basic argument that “no fresh rights were sought.” The Russians argued that they were only trying to guarantee the rights and privileges that were entrusted in previous treaties. However, Russian protective rights over the Ottoman Greeks were merely a Russian interpretation or rather misinterpretation. The basis of the Russian claims over the privileges of the Greek population was the stipulations of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774. By articles VII and XIV, the Porte promised to protect the Christian religion and churches and recognize the right of Russian protection of a Russo-Greek church to be built in Galata. These articles did not specifically state that Russia had any right to protect Greek subjects of the Ottoman Empire, although this legend was accepted by many contemporary politicians and historians.¹⁴² For instance, Moltke, in his history of 1828-29 War, criticized the Porte, “They [treaties between the Ottoman Empire and Russia] contained within themselves the seeds of future wars; the mere fact of giving to a foreign monarch rights of protection over the subjects of the Porte might lend an appearance of justice to the most arbitrary attack on the part of that monarch.”¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Saab, p. 31.

¹⁴² See, for a splendid discussion of the treaty, Roderic Davison, “‘Russian Skill or Turkish Imbecility’: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered”, *Slavic Review*, vol. 35, no. 3 (1976), pp. 463-483; Joseph L. Wieczynski, “The Myth of Kuchuk-Kainardja in American Histories of Russia”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1968), 376-379.

¹⁴³ Baron [Helmuth] Moltke, *The Russians in Bulgaria and Rumelia in 1828 and 1829* (London, 1854), p. 4.

Menshikov's proposals were unlikely to be accepted by the Ottomans. The Porte wanted to negotiate an arrangement regarding the issues of the Holy Lands, but there was no point in discussing an agreement regarding the rights and privileges of Ottoman Christians with a foreign country. These rights were naturally subject to the sovereign will of the Sultan, and thus their status was a domestic matter.

On 5 May, Menshikov conveyed a draft of a convention, and claimed that he would leave Istanbul and break all diplomatic relations unless it was accepted. He issued another ultimatum on 11 May this time stipulating a three-day acceptance period. Before his departure, Menshikov delivered a draft of a convention dated 20 May. He first waited in the *Gromonosets* and then left for Odessa. He would wait in Odessa for an affirmative reply for an additional eight days.¹⁴⁴ The mission, which was planned to be short, was prolonged due to Ottoman determination not to yield to Russian demands. As tensions increased in the European capitals, Russia limited its demands to a formal agreement. Nevertheless, Russia's coercive diplomacy failed, as a final agreement could not be reached. When Prince Menshikov returned to Odessa on 21 May, the Russians had achieved nothing but a rupture in relations with the Sublime Porte. In his memoirs, Mikhail Gorchakov notes, "The embassy of Prince Menshikov accompanied by the staff of the Fifth Army and the Black Sea fleet was to have the most unprofitable results."¹⁴⁵ Menshikov's entourage, agenda and manners played a role in this failure, even though the mission was devised to frighten the Porte into making concessions.

¹⁴⁴ Zayonchkovskii, *Prilozheniya* I, no.147, pp. 434-436; For the French original and English translation of the proposal, *Eastern Papers*, Part I, pp. 220-222; for the Turkish translation, *Mesâil*, no. 13, pp. 295-296.

¹⁴⁵ "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 45.

After Menshikov left Istanbul, French and British squadrons arrived at Beşik (Besica) Bay at the entrance of the Dardanelles. The moves of the French and British squadrons were not just military maneuvers but also political manifestations of naval powers. This move signified that Britain and France would come to the aid of the Ottomans if the necessity arose.

3.4 The Hot Summer of 1853. The Vienna Note and the Russian Occupation of the Principalities

On 26 June, the Tsar issued a manifesto asserting the necessity of an invasion of the Principalities.¹⁴⁶ In the following week, first Russian troops entered the Principalities, where they would remain for more than a year.¹⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the Ottomans negotiated with Britain and France over the specific military aid the latter would provide in case of further Russian incursion into Ottoman lands. However, Russia, lacking the support of any great power, was reluctant to engage in war. Soon after the invasion, Nicholas I expressed his optimism in a letter to Gorchakov: “the invasion of Bucharest and our military activities will most likely end soon, for England and France will come to an understanding, and together with Austria they will persuade the Turks to satisfy our demands... Now, let the forces take rest and get ready for their honorable campaign back home.”¹⁴⁸ However, Gorchakov would

¹⁴⁶ For the manifesto, see *Sobranie donezenii o voennyykh deistviyakh i diplomaticeskikh bumag i aktov, otnosyashchikhsya do voiny 1853, 1854, 1855 i 1855 godov* (St. Petersburg, 1858), [hereafter, *Sobranie donezenii*], p. 13.

¹⁴⁷ N. K. Schilder, “Zametka o sobtyiyakh 1853-1854 gg. (Po povodu stati Feldmarshal Paskevich v Krymskui voinu)”, *Russkaya starina*, 1875, vol. 14, no. 10, pp. 380-392.

¹⁴⁸ Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part I, footnote 2, p. 13.

later write in his memoirs that war was already unavoidable following the invasion of the Principalities.¹⁴⁹

Russia, being isolated, remained passive in the Principalities without adopting a strategy of military advancement. The future policies of Austria and Prussia were unclear. A surprise attack on Istanbul was then impossible. Russia therefore pursued a wait-and-see policy during the summer. While the European powers were determined to solve the Russo-Ottoman conflict, the Porte took measures for possible war making preparations to prevent a possible Russian advance. Most of the preparations were implemented secretly, to avoid giving Russia any pretext for war. Although the Ottomans did not accept any Russian demands, they were reluctant to provoke a war, as the nature and limits of Western support were then unclear.

In the summer of 1853, diplomatic efforts, centered in Vienna, were undertaken to settle the dispute between the Porte and Russia. The discussions in the capital of the Habsburg Empire took final form on 31 July 1853 in a paper known famously as the Vienna Note. This note was accepted by the Russian government. The Ottoman Council of 17 members, convened on 14 August, however, did not approve the Note. Redcliffe enclosed a list of the members of the council along with their opinions about the note. None of the members had voted for acceptance. Mustafa Reşid Pasha asked for modifications, while most of the other members wanted complete rejection.¹⁵⁰ In a meeting with Redcliffe, after emphasizing his pacifist aims, Mustafa Reşid Pasha claimed the necessity of maintaining contact with the war party. “There was no chance of obtaining a majority in favor of accepting Count Buol’s note [Vienna Note]. The only way to avoid a complete refusal was, he

¹⁴⁹ “Zapiski Gorchakova”, p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ Stratford to Clarendon, Therapia, 14 August 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, pp. 415-416.

[Mustafa Reşid Pasha] said, to propose the note with certain modifications.” Reşid Pasha further stated that the pressure from the British government for acceptance of the Vienna Note would certainly diminish popular sympathy towards Britain and that Pasha himself could not prevent such an unfortunate development. The Porte finally decided to ask for amendments, and a new draft, called the Turkish ultimatum, was sent to Vienna on 20 August.¹⁵¹

The amendments were in turn refused by St Petersburg. The Russians claimed that the spirit of the note had been undermined by the Ottomans. In this, they were correct. The Ottoman version promised almost nothing to the Russians. Although only a few words were altered, the document now declared that the Ottomans had never ceased to watch over the maintenance of the religious immunities of the Orthodox population. It was also implicitly stated that the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca did not grant Russia any rights regarding protection of the Ottoman Greeks. According to another revision, the Orthodox believers would enjoy the same rights and privileges possessed by other Christian sects in the Ottoman Empire. Nesselrode argues, “What it was designed to recognize is, that there has ever existed on the part of Russia active solicitude for her coreligionists in Turkey, as also for the maintenance of their religious immunities; and that the Ottoman Government is disposed to take account of that solicitude, and also to leave those immunities untouched.” However, the changed note claims that “the protection of the Christian religion” was granted by the Porte alone. Thus, the document demonstrated that there was no right as to the Russian protection of the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman

¹⁵¹ Saab, p. 65; For the Ottoman amendments, Zayonchkovskii, *Prilozheniya*, vol. II, pp. 60-63; *Mesâil*, vol. I, pp. 312-315

Empire. According to Nesselrode the Russian right to watch over the strict fulfillment of the privileges of the Orthodox believers was nullified.¹⁵²

The alterations clearly show that the Porte was careful in selecting the words of the document to be signed. The Ottomans were reluctant to sign anything so vague that it could be interpreted in multiple ways in the future. However, after so much diplomatic effort, the amendments in the document were frowned upon in European diplomatic circles, “the unwillingness of the Sultan to bend to the suggestion of His Allies would offer an unfavourable contrast to the readiness with which they were acceded to by the Emperor.”¹⁵³ No one in the British government understood the importance of the alterations: “Her Majesty’s Government considered the modifications to be unimportant, and regretted that they had been proposed.”¹⁵⁴ Clarendon, for example, completely failed to understand the Ottoman revisions: “it was on account of a few unimportant words that the Turks wished to introduce into an agreement by which they alone were to be bound.”¹⁵⁵ The Vienna Note showed that the European powers did not understand what rights the Russians claimed to possess. The European powers, who prepared the note, only sought to prepare a document that would not be rejected by Russia. Therefore, the Ottoman modifications were a great blow to the efforts in Vienna. The Ottoman refusal, however, demonstrated that the Ottomans would never sign anything that might grant Russia some rights over the Ottoman Christians. Although the Ottoman attitude drew reactions in the European capitals at first, a Russian document that appeared in Berlin newspapers in September 1853 changed the diplomatic atmosphere.

¹⁵² For the analysis of Nesselrode on the changes of the Vienna note, see, *Eastern Papers*, part II, pp. 104-105.

¹⁵³ Seymour to Clarendon, 2 September 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 461.

¹⁵⁴ Clarendon to Westmorland, 20 September 1853, *Eastern Papers*, Part II, p. 110.

¹⁵⁵ Clarendon to Seymour, 31 August 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 452.

On September 20, Clarendon would claim that “Russia puts an interpretation on it [the Vienna note] that was not intended by the 4 Powers & who might consequently give rise hereafter to the disputes and misunderstandings that we intended to guard against by the Note”¹⁵⁶ Nesselrode, in his private interpretation of the Vienna Note, commented on the Ottoman modifications. Nesselrode interpreted the text of the Vienna Note as a guarantee of the maintenance of the privileges and immunities of the Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire. According to the Russian Chancellor the Porte must have taken into account of Russia to touch the immunities of its Orthodox subjects. This interpretation was soon attacked by the British press, and following the so-called ‘violent interpretation’, political support of the Ottoman Empire in Europe dramatically increased.¹⁵⁷ The British diplomats, who criticized the Ottomans for rejecting the Vienna Note, admitted the correctness of the rejection.

The Russians were increasingly pacifist in their diplomacy, as they failed to secure the support of any European power in a possible war. The plans to invade the Ottoman capital were no longer feasible, and thus Russian diplomacy sought a peaceful settlement. While the Russians were sought an honorable exit from the crisis, on 4 October 1853, the Ottomans declared war on Russia. The riots and demonstrations that took place in the Ottoman capital on 11 and 12 September 1853 were obvious signs of war fervor. However, it was the Ottoman army ready for a war rather than the popular zeal that played a critical role in the commencement of hostilities. Time was working against the Ottomans. It was difficult to build a large army, but it was even more difficult and expensive to maintain the already assembled

¹⁵⁶ Clarendon to Russell, 20 September 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 496.

¹⁵⁷ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 111-112.

forces. Clarendon was pessimistic about the situation, “The winter will be passed by Russia in preparations for the spring but it will be a period of exhaustion of the Turks. The internal elements of dissolution will be actively at work & while we are all laboring for integrity & independence Turkey as She now stands will disappear from the map of Europe.”¹⁵⁸

The final peace effort occurs at Olmütz, where the Russian Tsar met with the Austrian Emperor on 27 September. Clarendon openly declared that “Our last card is Olmütz, and if that fails we must I fear prepare for war.” In his conversations with Franz Joseph, Nicholas I continued to argue that “he seeks to obtain nothing but what he is already entitled to by existing treaties & wishes only to maintain the ‘status quo’ in religious matters.”¹⁵⁹ The Tsar argued that he asked for no new rights, and no increased authority. The Russian army would remain passive in the Principalities and, as the Russian government maintained, wait until the rights they possessed by treaties were secured.¹⁶⁰ Nesselrode stated to Seymour, “Our position is this: War has been declared against us by Turkey; we shall in all probability issue no counter declaration, nor shall we make an attack upon Turkey; we shall remain with folded arms, only resolved to repel any assault mad upon us whether in the Principalities or on our Asiatic frontier, which we have been reinforcing; so we shall remain during the winter, ready to receive any peaceful overtures which during that time may be made to us by Turkey; that is our position.”¹⁶¹ While the unfavorable environment for Russia compelled them to adopt an increasingly pacifist policy, the Porte, by

¹⁵⁸ Clarendon to Stratford, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, pp. 620-621.

¹⁵⁹ Westmorland to Clarendon, 27 September 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 517.

¹⁶⁰ Westmorland to Clarendon, 27 September 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 518.

¹⁶¹ Seymour to Clarendon, 14 October 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 564.

contrast, found the international atmosphere favorable to a halt in Russia's aggressive plans, at least for some time ahead.

While a Russian advance to the south of the Danube would initiate a European war, a defensive strategy by the Russians would most likely reestablish peace, as both Britain and France did not see any reason for war against Russia unless the latter planned an encroachment to the south. Diplomatic activities never ceased, even after the declaration of war. Vienna continued to be the center of diplomatic efforts. A draft note was prepared by Britain, France, Austria and Prussia to be proposed to both Russia and the Ottoman Empire. First, an armistice and peace would be established. By this route, the European powers took pains to prepare an honorable exit for the Russian Tsar.

Shortly after the Ottoman declaration of war, the French and British also agreed to defend Ottoman integrity and independence. According to the French Emperor, "in the first instance the two Governments do not mediate an offensive war with Russia, leaving themselves, however, full latitude to act in future as circumstances may require."¹⁶² The line of defense should be the Balkans. The French government planned: "if the Turks cross the Danube and attack the Russians, we should not help them, but if they are beaten and obliged to retire to their present position, our fleet would act as far as they could."¹⁶³ However, how and when they could build such a line of defense was another matter.

Diplomatic initiatives in the European capitals did not produce any results, and the international atmosphere would be fully anti-Russian following the "Sinop

¹⁶² Cowley to Clarendon, Paris, 5 October 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 530.

¹⁶³ Cowley to Clarendon, Paris, 5 October 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 537.

“Affair” on 30 November 1853. Britain and France were so frightened following this naval disaster that they rushed to the aid of the Ottoman Empire to prevent its downfall. European diplomacy and the concert of Europe ultimately failed, and war became general.

3.5 Illusions of Nicholas I. Gendarmerie of Europe or Conqueror of “Tsargrad”?

In 1853, several alternative plans were discussed in St. Petersburg to resolve the Eastern Question to Russia’s benefit. Destruction of the Ottoman Empire by a coup de main on Istanbul appeared to be the best alternative for Russia. During the reign of Nicholas I, an attack on Istanbul was under constant discussion in military circles and by the Tsar himself.¹⁶⁴ Sevastopol, the Russian military port in the Black Sea, had been designed for the future conquest of Istanbul. A surprise attack on Istanbul was planned not only to achieve actual conquest but also to enable a speedy conclusion of a possible war with the Ottoman Empire, as the Russian campaigns on the Danube had been long, devastating and expensive both materially and morally. In January 1853, the Russian Tsar supported an operation in Bosphorus and Istanbul involving 16,000 men. This proposal was based on Admiral Lazarev’s 1835 plan.¹⁶⁵

However, Nicholas I did not wish to risk his position in Europe for the sake of political influence over the Ottoman Empire or even a military conquest of the Ottoman lands. The Russian government preferred an agreed-upon destruction of the

¹⁶⁴ Goldfrank, p. 118; For the plans of Admiral Kornilov, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaievich and Nicholas I, see Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv [Russian State Military-History Archive], Moscow (hereafter RGVIA), f. 400, op. 4. d. 586.

¹⁶⁵ “Handwritten note of Imperator Nikolai I regarding the naval expedition on Bosphorus and Tsargrad, 7 [19] January 1853”, Zayonchkovskii, *Prilozheniya*, I, no. 210, pp. 582-583; Goldfrank, p. 118; Petrov, vol. I, pp. 62-63.

Ottoman Empire and the reallocation of its territories. The gentlemen's agreement with the Aberdeen government in 1844 was intended to further this aim. In 1853, when Aberdeen once again came to power in Britain, Nicholas I reminded Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg, of his agreement with Aberdeen for the partition of the Ottoman Empire. On the evening of 9 January 1853, Nicholas I openly stated that England and Russia should reach an understanding regarding the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁶ Meeting Seymour again on 20 February, Nicholas I emphasized that the Ottoman Empire was dying and that he desired a private understanding with Britain. The following day, he further elaborated on his ideas of a partition proposing Egypt and Cyprus for Britain. However, Seymour's replies were not satisfactory to the Tsar. These conversations were not long kept secret, and letters of the British ambassador to his government were published in the Blue Book in 1854.

As the British rejected partition of the Ottoman territories, Nicholas I sought new partners for his schemes.¹⁶⁷ On 29 May, Nicholas I sent a letter to Paskevich proposing his ideas for an offensive. "If the Turks stand their ground, I will order a blockade of the Bosphorus and the capture Turkish vessels in the Black Sea. I will then offer Austria the right to occupy Herzegovina and Serbia. If it does not accept, then I will claim the independence of the Principalities, Serbia and Herzegovina... uprisings will break out everywhere in Turkey and the last minutes of the Ottoman Empire will come."¹⁶⁸ In the spring of 1853, the Tsar asked Menshikov and Paskevich about the possibility of an invasion of Istanbul. The report of Menshikov

¹⁶⁶ Goldfrank, p. 119.

¹⁶⁷ Having sent a letter to the Russian ambassador in Vienna Nicholas I shared his plan with Austrian government. Tarle, vol. I, pp. 243-244.

¹⁶⁸ Imperator Nikolai to Knyaz Warsawski, Tsarskoe Selo, 17 [29] May 1853, Zayonchkovskii, *Prilozheniya*, vol. I, no. 150, pp. 437-438.

was not optimistic about the prospects of a successful attack on Istanbul. Paskevich advised the Tsar to invade the Principalities ‘as a guarantee’ to obtain the demanded concessions from the Porte.¹⁶⁹ Because of the ongoing diplomatic crisis, a sudden attack on Istanbul was irrelevant. Thus, the Russians gave up plans for an operation on Istanbul. Other plans were also discussed in 1853, including an operation on Varna and Burgaz and a blockade of Istanbul.

To be sure, the Russian Tsar wanted the best possible outcome: it might be an invasion of the Balkans and Istanbul or a secret treaty with the Sublime Porte similar to the Hünkâr İskelesi. It might also be an agreement that would enshrine a definite right of Russia to protect the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire, thereby increasing Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire. The benefit that would arise from the crisis was unclear, but Russia wanted at least something that would guarantee its future influence in the Ottoman Empire. The best option was a partition of the Ottoman Empire between Russia and a European coalition, similar to the partition of Poland in the previous century. However, his miscalculations regarding the aims and moves of the other great powers led to an unmanageable crisis and then a European war.

At the beginning of the crisis, Nicholas I was not entirely wrong in pressing the Porte as that had become a routine in dealing with the Ottoman Empire. The European powers usually bullied the Ottoman Empire when they thought it necessary. During the diplomatic crisis, the French representatives used aggressive language and even backed their demands with a naval demonstration. Count Leiningen, in 1852, and Prince Menshikov, in 1853, followed suit. The fault in the

¹⁶⁹ Schilder, “Zametka o sobityakh 1853-1854 gg. (Po povodu stati Feldmarshal Paskevich v Krymskuiu voynu)”, pp. 380-392.

foreign policy of the Tsar lay in his understanding of European politics. Neither Nicholas I nor his high officials predicted an Anglo-French coalition. Nicholas I wanted to act in harmony with the British government but failed in this strategy, as the British followed a policy of preserving Ottoman integrity. The Russian government also failed to understand the fears of the Habsburgs that a war in the Balkans would be detrimental to their own survival. In the years immediately preceding the Crimean War, Russia and Austria worked together very closely, and Russia wanted Austrian support for its plans in the Ottoman Empire in return for its assistance during the Hungarian revolt. However, the Crimean War revealed that the interests of these powers differed fundamentally in the Balkans. Inheritance plans with respect to “sick man of Europe” could only be realized with the collaboration of one or more great powers. Thus, Russian diplomacy failed.

During the Russo-Ottoman war, peace remained possible, but the Russian assault on the Ottoman fleet at Sinop Bay put a final end to all diplomatic initiatives. Thus, the naval battle, which seemed advantageous and prestigious for the Russians, would damage the Russian position in Europe as well as in the Near East.

3.6. Ottoman Ir/rationality? Diplomacy of the “Fanatic and Ignorant Turks”

Ironically, the war erupted and transformed into a European conflict when all great powers were reluctant to engage in such a conflict. The Ottoman diplomatic maneuvers, i.e., rejection of the Russian proposals during the prolonged Menshikov Mission (28 February – 21 May 1853), rejection of the European initiative at Vienna (summer 1853), the proclamation of war (4 October 1853), and the first fire on the

Danube by the Ottoman troops (22-23 October 1853) surprised the Russians and the other great powers. These political choices have sometimes been depicted as clear evidence of Ottoman aspirations for war. Rich, for instance, argues that “Among those statesmen who blocked efforts to arrange a peaceful resolution of the Near Eastern crises of the 1850s and who believed in the desirability or necessity of war with Russia, those in the forefront were the Turks.”¹⁷⁰ Jelavich claims, “Scholars have attempted to explain how the Great Powers – Russia, France, Great Britain, and the Ottoman Empire – were drawn into a major conflict in which the immediate issues in dispute were not clear, and when no government, with the exception of the Ottoman regime, wished to fight.”¹⁷¹ According to Goldfrank, “it was the Ottomans who initially most eager of all to give battle.”¹⁷²

The Russian government abstained from using obsessive language against the European powers, while they found the Ottomans to be the only responsible party in the initiation of war. Nesselrode claims that the Porte declared war because they yielded “notwithstanding the counsels of the European representatives at Constantinople, to the impulse of warlike ideas and of Mussulman fanaticism”.¹⁷³ According to the Russians, France and Britain wanted peace, but they acted with prejudices against the Russian government.¹⁷⁴ Although there is a common understanding that the Ottomans wanted war, it is not clear what the Sublime Porte sought from a Russian war. Therefore, many politicians and historians have shared the view that the Ottoman government was irrational in its decisions. Europeans perceived Ottoman society as well as the government as corrupt and fanatical and

¹⁷⁰ Rich, p. 5.

¹⁷¹ Review of Ann P. Saab, *The Origins of the Crimean Alliance* (Charlottesville, 1977) by Barbara Jelavich, *Slavic Review*, vol. 38, no. 1 (1979), p. 153.

¹⁷² Goldfrank, p. 283.

¹⁷³ *The Annual Register or a View of the History and Politics of the Year 1853* (London, 1854), p. 295.

¹⁷⁴ “Presentation of the Russian Policy regarding the Eastern Question, 19 February 1854”, *Sobranie donesenii*, p. 74.

thus in need of control and direction. Accordingly, decisions and actions of the Ottoman government were frequently portrayed as illogical and uncoordinated in both diplomatic correspondence and Crimean War literature.

With the exception of the Holy Lands crisis, the Russians had no material objectives. The quarrel was based on words or expressions concerning Russian rights over the Ottoman Greeks. The question was whether these expressions would lead to increased Russian influence in the Ottoman Empire and thus challenge Ottoman independence and integrity. The European diplomats did not understand why the Porte declined the Russian proposal for a guarantee of Russia's existing rights over the Ottoman Greek population.

Many British politicians had good relations with the Russians, and felt some sympathy for Russia. However, the Russian demands, which were seen as normal in Europe, were unacceptable to the Porte. Ottoman diplomacy had always sought to emphasize that the Russians did not possess the rights they claimed to possess and that it was exclusively the Porte's responsibility to protect Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman Empire. A careful examination of the Ottoman amendments clearly shows that the Porte worried about Russian intervention through the use of these agreements. Nesselrode's interpretations confirmed the Ottoman concerns. Whether any additional rights had been attained by Russia following the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was unclear. In fact, no such rights had been accorded to the Russian government, and granting some rights to Russia over the Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire might affect the well-being of the Ottoman Empire. Such rights would also conflict with the *Tanzimat* program, which envisaged full control of the population through reform and a much more reliable and efficient army. Thus, the

rejection of Russian demands should not be understood as an Ottoman desire for war. While Russia sought a guarantee regarding its alleged rights with respect to the Christian Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire, the Porte wanted to show that such rights had never existed. Russia, the Porte felt, should not be involved in the Ottoman Empire's problems with its Orthodox population, as this could constitute a sustained threat to the sovereign rights of the Ottoman Empire.

A British politician portrayed the diplomatic activities as “To fight a battle of words over the ‘Independence’ which has no existence in fact.”¹⁷⁵ According to Seymour there was no point in trying to find the best words for an agreement between the two countries, as the Russians - the stronger party - would ultimately provide the definitive interpretation. “Had the differences between the Emperor and the Sultan been left for settlement by an act to be agreed upon between their two Cabinets, the responsibility would have rested with the Porte, while the power of interpreting that act would have remained with the stronger of the contracting parties, who as has been seen by the construction which they place upon the Treaty of Kainardji are not backward in founding very extensive demands upon very slight grounds.”¹⁷⁶ Seymour, however, argued that if the European powers were party to an agreement between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, they could prevent over-interpretation of the arrangement. Over-interpretation of the Vienna note, he argued, would not be possible, as it was prepared by the European powers.

Ottoman rationality can be seen in the political choices of the Porte. The Porte did not accept Menshikov's proposals, which would have given Russia protective rights over the Ottoman Greeks. The Porte did not declare war following the Russian

¹⁷⁵ Argyll to Russell, 7 October 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 544.

¹⁷⁶ Seymour to Clarendon, 28 September 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 521.

invasion of the Principalities, a decision that was sound, as the Porte then lacked an efficient military force. The acceptance of the Vienna note only with alterations was also reasonable, as the Russian interpretation clearly showed what was at stake. The Ottoman government declared war in the most favorable circumstances, when its army was prepared for a defensive. The war was declared in autumn - late for an ambitious military campaign and at a time when the security of Istanbul was not threatened. In addition, the Ottomans secured British and French political support and naval assistance. Therefore, Ottoman diplomacy does not deserve to be criticized as fanatical and irrational.

Another question is whether the Ottomans wanted war with Russia. During war preparations, the Sublime Porte did not appear to be eager for war. Throughout the reparations of the fortifications, the Ottoman government was always careful to act in accordance with the existing treaties.¹⁷⁷ The most frequent sentiment expressed in Ottoman documents before the outbreak of war was that the Empire should avoid giving Russia a pretext for war.¹⁷⁸ Although the passage of Russian warships to İbrail was prohibited, the Porte discussed the possibility of not applying the rule in order not to give Russia a pretext for war. The rule was applied only after consultation with Stratford Redcliffe and a resolution that the presence of Russian steamers and boats in the upper Danube would be highly detrimental to the Ottoman defense if war were to break out.¹⁷⁹ Two common and frequently used expressions in the Ottoman documents during the diplomatic crisis are “pursuing moderate diplomacy” (*mutedilâne politika takip edilmesi*) and “avoidance of giving any pretext to Russia

¹⁷⁷ ATASE, k. 2, d. 7, f. 31, 14 Ramazan 1269 [21 June 1853]; ATASE, k. 2, d. 7, f. 28/1, 19 Ramazan 1269 [26 June 1853].

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, ATASE, k. 2, d. 6, f. 1 and 1/1, 3 Ramazan 1269 [10 June 1853].

¹⁷⁹ ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 4, 28 Ramazan 1269 [5 July 1853]; k. 8, d. 3, f. 4; k. 6, d. 18, f. 38 [Copy of the resolution of Bâb-1 Âli], 17 Şevval 1269 [24 July 1853]; k. 6, d. 18, f. 38/1, 26 Şevval 1269 [2 August 1853]; Ömer Pasha to General Gorchakov, k. 8, d. 3, f. 5/2; k. 8, d. 3, f. 19, 29 Zilkâde 1269 [3 September 1853].

[for war]” (*Rusya'ya bir gûne serrişte verilmemesi*). The extensive use of these two expressions in both diplomatic and internal correspondence clearly shows the pacific and defensive diplomacy of the Ottoman government.

There is in fact no indication of an Ottoman desire for war for territorial or diplomatic gain. In addition, during the war, the Ottomans did not seek to regain territory lost to the Russian Empire.¹⁸⁰ After British and French entry into the war, some plans were formulated to establish buffer zones between the Ottoman and Russian Empires at the expense of Russia, but such plans were more strongly supported by the British and French governments than by the Sublime Porte.

Indeed, changes by the Porte in the final note to Prince Menshikov or in the Vienna note can be seen as conciliatory rather than evidence of Ottoman obstinacy/fanaticism/irrationality. However, the Ottoman government was aware of what was at stake and pursued a rational policy against rising Russian political influence over its subject peoples, a point not well understood by European politicians. Although a war was not desirable to the Ottomans, it was an option, especially when support of the naval powers was secured. It was better to challenge the Russian demands in a favorable international environment than to make political concessions that would result in worse outcomes in the future. Accordingly, the peaceful moves of the Porte against great power bullying were generally overlooked. It should also be noted that, throughout the crisis, most European efforts were intended to appease Russia, while the Ottomans were simply taken for granted. Temperley was right in stating that “Europe’s diplomats did not understand Turkish

¹⁸⁰ Hakan Kirımlı, “A Scion of the Crimean Khans in the Crimean War: The Allied Powers and the Question of the Future of the Crimea”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (2013), p. 214.

psychology.” Actually, they did not even attempt to understand the policy of the Porte as “Turkey was not treated by the Powers as on an equality with Russia”.¹⁸¹

When the Porte was under pressure from one of the European states, it traditionally sought an alliance with another great power. During the 1848 crisis the Ottoman government secured the support of the naval powers. However, in 1852, lacking the support of a great power, the Ottomans yielded to the demands of Austria. Thus, during the crisis with Russia in 1853, they once again took pains to obtain the assistance of Britain and France. At this time, the Ottomans first enjoyed the diplomatic backing of the naval powers and later their military assistance. However, Nicholas I was slow to understand the political environment of Europe.

Changes in offices were occasionally used as a tool of diplomacy in Istanbul. Such concessions to the great powers were instrumental in calming the political atmosphere and gaining time. Throughout 1853, Russia waited for a change in Ottoman foreign policy, but the Ottomans continued to apply a consistent policy, despite changes in critical offices. Mehmed Ali Pasha, a war-prone Ottoman bureaucrat, and the more peaceful Mustafa Reşid and Rıfat Pashas favored similar policies of not giving any significant political concessions to Russia. Clarendon added a PS in a letter to Redcliffe where he claimed, “I cannot help fearing that Reşid Pacha thinks this a good opportunity for settling matters with Russia & that he rather wants war having as he believes France & England to back him but we can’t allow of this unless it is necessary & of that we & not he must judge.”¹⁸² For political reasons, those in the opposition were more hawkish than those responsible for governing the state, but there was a unified state policy, and red lines were

¹⁸¹ Temperley, p. 345.

¹⁸² Clarendon to Stratford, 18 August 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 426.

established by the Ottoman government. Changes in offices in the foreign ministry thus brought little alteration to Ottoman foreign policy.

Why were Ottoman politicians criticized as irrational? The major reason was that no European power really tried to understand Ottoman politics, but viewed them through stereotypical lenses. Diplomatic relations were not immune to bias and orientalist perspectives. The Ottomans could be cunning at most; wisdom, skill and insight were not among the characteristics of the oriental man, whether it be a member of the Porte or a layman in the streets of Istanbul. “Great allowance must be made for the Turks – they may be ignorant, short sighted, fanatical and treacherous, but then they are such as Mahomet makes them and we all admit that they are a European necessity, i.e. we want them for our own purposes and as long as we do so, we must adapt our means to our end, and not destroy them.”¹⁸³ Such were the words uttered by Lord Clarendon, the British foreign minister. In another occasion, he claims why they wanted to settle the diplomatic crisis, “If the quarrel is not settled now, we shall have the break up of the Turkish Empire under the very worst circumstances for Europe, viz. while 150 000 barbarians are under arms and ready for anything. This is a point well deserving consideration.”¹⁸⁴

The orientalist and pejorative language employed in the official documents regarding the Ottoman administration has affected the Crimean War literature as well. It is possible to find simplified, almost caricaturized, descriptions of Ottoman diplomacy in serious monographs. For many students of the Crimean War, the functioning of the Porte and its political choices differ from the manners of civilized

¹⁸³ Clarendon to Seymour, 31 August 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 452.

¹⁸⁴ Clarendon to Westmorland, 20 September 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 497.

governments. Temperley, for instance, argues, "... the rules of intercourse between civilized states did not apply to Turkey. That strange empire was an exception to all rules."¹⁸⁵ Temperley vividly but with a derogatory language portrayed the Ottoman Grand Council when it decided war on Russia on 26 September 1853:

Its members, mostly unemployed pashas and softas, passed to their deliberations through the streets crowded with soldiers flourishing modern weapons and with bravos flourishing ancient ones, with dervishes praying aloud for vengeance on the infidel. It was a fit preparation for an assembly unknown to the law, free from rules of procedure, and given over to bigotry and to prejudice... As the debates proceeded the naked ugly face of fanaticism peered forth. Not a man dared oppose the general feeling.¹⁸⁶

Thus, the political choices of the Porte were often mischaracterized as resulting from fanaticism, ignorance, and corruption in Istanbul. Explaining the protests in Istanbul in September 1853 as one significant reason for the declaration of war, Temperley claims that the Sultan might have lost the throne if he persisted in not declaring war. "The Sultan himself could not then have stopped the declaration... His throat might be cut by his own subjects if he showed hesitation."¹⁸⁷ Interestingly, while the war fervor in Britain has been discussed as a display of public opinion, demonstrations in Istanbul have been portrayed as Turkish, Eastern or religious "fanaticism". Clearly, the Ottoman people were viewed as an archaic community that lacked the facilities of modern society. Ottomans, from top to bottom, were not seen as part the civilized world. For example, in his memoirs, Pyotr Kanonovich Menkov, a Russian officer and participant in the Crimean War, claimed that France bribed the

¹⁸⁵ Temperley, p 341.

¹⁸⁶ Temperley, p. 360.

¹⁸⁷ Temperley, p. 361.

Porte with a million francs and that if the Tsar had offered more, the question of the Holy Lands could have been resolved at the outset.¹⁸⁸

Sometimes, the Ottoman government and the Sultan were completely distracted from the table of diplomacy while Stratford Redcliffe, the celebrated British Ambassador to Istanbul, took their place. His experience in the East, knowledge about the workings of the Ottoman government as well as his personal relationship with high Ottoman officials, including Abdülmecid I, placed him in an exceptional position. Stratford Redcliffe thus enjoyed an authority higher than that of other European missions and was even known as the ‘Sultan of Sultan’.¹⁸⁹ His influence and personal capabilities led many to believe that all decisions taken in the Ottoman capital originated with him.¹⁹⁰ Actually, Redcliffe himself might have fuelled this understanding. In one of his reports to London, he idealized himself, “Perceiving my reserve the [Mustafa Reşid] Pasha was deeply affected; his eyes overflowed with tears; forgetful for a moment of his rank he kissed my hand, and in the most moving terms implored me not to forsake his country in the midst of distress and dangers which it could not avoid without an unworthy sacrifice. The scene was to me a most painful one.”¹⁹¹ Clarendon, the British Secretary of State, praised Redcliffe’s mission when Menshikov was putting pressure on the Ottoman government: “Your task is indeed not a light one, to maintain the independence of Turkey, to save Russia from disgrace and to keep the peace of Europe.”¹⁹² Mustafa Reşid Pasha declared to the European representatives that the Porte could not guarantee the safety of Europeans in Istanbul. He even claimed that the Sultan’s

¹⁸⁸ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 14.

¹⁸⁹ Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part I, p. 17.

¹⁹⁰ Tarle, vol. I, p. 191.

¹⁹¹ Quoted in Temperley, p. 346.

¹⁹² Clarendon to Stratford, 18 June 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 301

throne was threatened by the war party. It is not clear whether he believed in these arguments or used them to attract the French and British fleets.

Such an understanding naturally places the Ottoman government and diplomacy in a very passive position, presenting it as a mere playground for complicated European diplomacy rather than as actor in its own rights. It is interesting that, although the Ottoman government was frequently accused of wanting war, the reason for this position was often attributed to a British diplomat, Redcliffe. Redcliffe was long criticized for supporting war against Russia; many thought that it was he who encouraged the Porte to stand fast against Russia and finally declare war.¹⁹³ “With the determination of Lord Stratford, and the cunning of some of the Turkish Ministers, it is vain to hope for much progress at Constantinople in the interests of peace.” Another document reads, “Most people desire peace but we are not on the road to it & unless the Turks are induced to come down in their pretension we shall continue to be dragged at their tail. Another misfortune & complication is that we cannot feel sure of Stratford’s acting with us for a peaceful solution... In short he seems just as wild as the Turks themselves & together they may & will defeat every combination coming from the West however well devised it may be.”¹⁹⁴ Interestingly, Redcliffe, who lived for decades in Istanbul, shared the ignorance and pejorative views about the Ottomans characteristic of the other European diplomats. First and foremost, he did not wish to learn Turkish. He was not happy with life in Istanbul and would have welcomed an assignment to a European capital. Thus, his language regarding the Ottomans was little different from that of Clarendon. He even believed Christianity could save the people of the East.

¹⁹³ Tarle, vol. I, pp. 188-192.

¹⁹⁴ Clarendon to Cowley, 10 November 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, pp. 625-626.

Another widespread explanation for Ottoman diplomacy during the Crimean War was the perceived split in the Ottoman governing circle between Europeanized reformists and traditional “old school” members. The members of the “old school” were generally portrayed as pro-war while the reformers were seen as more pacifist. However, this generalization cannot explain Ottoman diplomacy, as the dividing line between the pro- and anti-war parties was never clear-cut. After the Menshikov Mission, on 16 June 1853, Captain Protopopov, commander of the steamer *Krym*, reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the anti-war party in Istanbul. According to the report, besides the Ottoman Sultan, Hüsrev Pasha, Rauf Pasha, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Ahmed Fethi Pasha, Hasan Rıza Pasha, Saffeti Pasha, Debrohor Reşid Pasha, and Halil Pasha were against a war.¹⁹⁵ In the list there were both reformers and the so-called old Ottomans. The proclamation of war was nearly unanimous in the Grand Council, suggesting that the notion of a split in Ottoman decision-making was exaggerated.¹⁹⁶ The Ottoman policy was neither wholly pacifist nor entirely aggressive. Ottoman governance was not always irrational or suffused by illogical ideas. The discussions during the Crimean War crisis clearly show that the Porte pursued a well-defined policy against Russian demands.

In the record (*zabitname*) of the Grand Council meeting at which war on Russia was declared, very harsh language was used against the *ulema*. In fact, it was not just a record but a critical evaluation of the meeting. Some of the clerics indeed spoke irresponsibly to the effect that the Ottoman Empire could easily defeat the enemy. (*hocaların birazı küffarı söyle kırar böyle biçeriz gibi saçma sözler söylemeleriyle*) It is clear that the *ulema* were very antagonistic to the bureaucrats,

¹⁹⁵ Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Drevnikh Aktov [Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, Moscow. Hereafter RGADA], “Secret information obtained in Constantinople”, f. 11, op. 1, d. 1260, l. 8

¹⁹⁶ Badem, p. 98.

who were more reserved about war, and did not understand the level of preparations. One member of the *ulema* was unhappy about not declaring war: Was it appropriate to not send the troops to fight but leave them to die? Why was war delayed?¹⁹⁷ Reşid Pasha's answer was clear. He stated that the army had not been ready and that, by acting cautiously, the army had found time to prepare. Now the Porte had the opportunity to decide whether to fight.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, it was now clear that the naval powers would protect Istanbul if the Russians attacked. Another participant claimed that "nonbelievers are all the same people", asking "how can they help us?"¹⁹⁹ There was a clear discrepancy between the opinions of the reformist bureaucrats and the *ulema*. However, at the meeting, Reşid Pasha tried to involve the *ulema* in the decision-making asking them what they wanted. Despite the fact that they knew nothing about foreign policy, they were made part of the decision-making process, so that the ultimate decision would not be questioned by any portion of Ottoman society.

The Ottoman bureaucrats were also not experts in military affairs, often pursued their own interests, and some of them were, in some cases, quite ignorant men. As Saab discusses, "Mehmet Ali, throughout the crisis, was to show more interest in what he conceived to be the justice of the Ottoman cause than in rational military predictions. Indeed this attitude was typical of many pious Ottoman officials, who felt too much logical consideration called into question the power of Allah to give victory to the right."²⁰⁰ Serasker Pasha did not wish to take any responsibility for the war. He was also unclear about the military strength of the

¹⁹⁷ "Şimdiye kadar askeri kavgaya sürmeyeib çürütmek revâ mi idi, niçin muharebe te'hir olundu", *Mesâil*, vol. I, p. 316.

¹⁹⁸ *Mesâil*, vol. I, p. 316.

¹⁹⁹ *Mesâil*, vol. I, p. 317.

²⁰⁰ Saab, p. 45.

Ottoman State. Therefore, there were no clear discussions about the military power and financial situation of the Empire. However, it appears that Reşid Pasha and other high officials of the Porte were now favorable toward war, and war was declared.

3.7. Conclusion

Previous treaties of the Porte with Russia and France abruptly gave rise to a diplomatic crisis. Both states demanded their treaty rights, but grants regarding the Holy Places conflicted. These trivial conflicts were not easy to resolve, as both powers were reluctant to consent. The overlapping capitulations made to Orthodox and Catholic believers became a dangerous problem as neither France nor Russia wished to compromise. The Russians, through an extraordinary mission and subsequent invasion, sought to obtain what they wanted. The Russian government declared that the invasion of the Principalities should not be viewed as aggression against the Ottoman Empire, and the European powers generally accepted this understanding. Russia waited for a peaceful solution to the diplomatic crisis throughout the summer. While the Ottomans accepted the Vienna note with some amendments, the Russians found the Ottomans' amendments unacceptable, and the crisis became graver. Thus, the first stone of the fire was set by the French by opening up discussion of the Holy Lands, and the Russians escalated the crisis through their uncompromising stance. However, it was the Porte that initiated hostilities. The destruction of the Ottoman fleet changed the nature of the war. The naval assault was perceived as a matter of prestige and honor for Britain and France as much as it was perceived as a major defeat for the Ottomans.

Anderson, the author of a prominent book on the Eastern Question, claims, “The Crimean War was thus the outcome of a series of misjudgements, misunderstandings and blunders, of stupidity, pride and obstinacy rather than of ill will. More than any great war of modern times, it took place by accident.”²⁰¹ Actually, the European diplomacy never lost its pace. Numerous notes and plans exchanged hands in European diplomatic circles, but the parties could not find a middle ground. As all great powers were reluctant to engage in war, many believed that peace would prevail. Even after the declaration of war by the Porte, Cowley said, “I confess I do not think matters are made much worse by the declaration of war, unless it leads to hostilities, which is hardly possible.”²⁰² However, a few months later, the naval powers would follow the example of the Ottomans and declare war on Russia. In the spring of 1854, the war had already evolved into a European war. Personal relations between European leaders and diplomats and trust in the concert of Europe resulted in exaggerated optimism about the prospects for peace.

The war cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, but failed to resolve the Eastern Question. The Russian military might soon threaten the Ottoman Empire once again. Therefore, in retrospect, it is commonly accepted that the Crimean War was unnecessary and useless. However, although the war resolved little, it was waged for something significant. The stakes were high when the European powers entered the war. The Eastern Question arose mainly from the strength of Russia and the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, combined with the strategic importance of the Ottoman territories, especially the Straits, and the fact that they could fall into the

²⁰¹ M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923. A Study in International Relations* (New York, 1966), p. 132.

²⁰² Cowley to Clarendon, Paris, 4 October 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, p. 528.

Russian hands putting Russia in a very strong position and changing the balance of power in Europe.

Which power was most responsible for the war: was it Russia, with its hawkish policy towards the Ottoman Empire in general but a pacifist strategy at the last minute, or the Ottoman Empire, which pursued a conciliatory foreign policy in general but declared war against a power that had already invaded some of its territories? It is a matter of perspective. The Emperor always declared that he sought no new rights but wanted only to preserve the existing Treaties and the *status quo* in religious matters. What was the *status quo*, and what were the already existing rights of the Emperor? The European diplomats themselves did not have adequate knowledge on these points, as was clear in the preparation of the Vienna note. Russia wanted peace, but Russian honor and dignity did not allow the Tsar to make real concessions, such as the withdrawal of its troops or a declaration that it did not possess protective rights over the Ottoman Greeks. After moving forward, it was too difficult for Nicholas I, one of the most ambitious leaders of the time, to step back. What then would be the foundation for peace? European states wanted peace, but none was open to concession or welcomed the increase in another's power. Therefore, when the *status quo* was altered or questioned, it was not easy to re-establish it. Nicholas I had never been as hesitant, unstable and contradictory with respect to the Ottoman Empire as in 1853-1854. His acts, thinking and character affected the Russian army as well as its war strategy and performance during the battles. Various plans were prepared, including the conquest of Istanbul and partition of the empire between Russia and the other great powers. In 1853, a diplomatic victory, however, was acceptable to the Tsar. The lack of an exit strategy for a proud Emperor was the most important obstacle to a peaceful end of the diplomatic crisis.

Nonetheless, the Ottoman policy-makers could be viewed as rational actors as much as their European counterparts. They may have pursued either their own interests by securing top official assignments for themselves or the national interest by adopting the policies that they considered best for the Ottoman Empire. However, they did not just passively follow the policies dictated by the Europeans. In fact, the Ottoman choices proved to be more independent and rational than has been depicted. This does not mean that the Ottoman government always selected the right option, but there was a decision-making process in which the representatives of the Porte sought to determine what policies would be in the best interest of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman institutions possessed many shortcomings. However, the historical evidence shows that the Porte pursued a rational and pragmatic foreign policy, even though it led to war and imposed a great financial burden. The Porte was not taken seriously during the diplomatic crisis and this was one of the major reasons for the war. Ottoman decision making has continued to be overlooked in the literature, a significant handicap of Crimean War historiography.

Researchers such as Saab and Badem, who have scrutinized Ottoman diplomacy, have uncovered more evidence about the motives behind Ottoman decisions. However, the bulk of the literature on the origins of the Crimean War has advanced simplistic arguments that the members of the Porte were irrational or passive followers of the policies of Redcliffe. To be sure, European diplomacy failed to resolve the crisis between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Instead of arguing that Redcliffe or Nicholas I was responsible for the war, it is more reasonable to argue that the problem was systematic in origin. The Ottoman government was not taken seriously, and there was an exaggerated trust in the concert of Europe which together decreased Europe's problem-solving powers.

On 12 June, Russia ceased the diplomatic activities with the Porte, and on 15 June gave an ultimatum. Nicholas I issued his manifesto for the invasion of the Principalities on 26 June. On 1 November, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire.²⁰³ Nicholas wanted and searched for an honorable exit from the war, but this unwanted war generalized. The Ottoman government wanted decrease in the Russian influence in Istanbul. However, the Porte, by no means, saw the war as the only possible way of attaining this aim. Actually, a diplomatic settlement was what the Porte was looking for.

²⁰³ *Sobranie donezenii*, p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

TO THE FRONT: ARMIES AND LOGISTICS

Battles are the visible aspects of war. In fact, preparations for the war and logistics in wartime are the key aspects of fighting. Successes in battle depend not only on the tactics and strategies employed on the battlefield but also many activities behind the front. The health and the morale of the soldiers, relations between civilians and the army, and the realization of military strategies all necessitated efficiency of non-combat activities such as supply, transportation, and accommodation. Thus, this chapter will discuss the war preparations of the Russian and the Ottoman armies. One section discusses Russo-Ottoman encounters on the Danube. Another section describes the terrain and local population, which are important for understanding the war activities.

4.1. An Ever-Losing Army: Russo-Ottoman Confrontations in the Balkans (1768-1829)

The Ottoman Empire was plagued by the military superiority of Russia from the last quarter of the 18th century until its collapse. Neither the age-old professional Janissary corps nor the universally conscripted *Nizam* forces of the 19th century proved to be a remedy for the power imbalance. As time passed and the pressure mounted further, the Ottoman State was only able to survive through uncompensated territorial losses. After each war, either a minority achieved new rights or a certain territory was split away. By the end of the 18th century, the Black Sea was no longer an Ottoman lake. Akyar, a Crimean Tatar village on the Crimean peninsula, had been transformed into the formidable military port of Sevastopol, while the modest fortress of Hocabey was styled as one of the most important port-cities of the time, i.e., Odessa. Meanwhile, Russia, having already secured the northern coast of the Black Sea, sought to move further south. The seizure of the Straits, however, would distort the European balance of power. Therefore, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which experienced difficulty in hindering the Russian expansion in the 18th and the 19th centuries, was one of the foremost subjects of European diplomacy.

The forward advance of the Russian army into Ottoman lands was also reflected in the titles of the Russian commanders. The title of Zadunaiskii, adopted by Pyotr Rumyantsev after the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty, well demonstrated the Russian army's first crossing over the Danube. The title of Aleksandr Suvorov – Rymnikskii - signified his victory in Rymnik. Grigorii Potyomkin's conquest of the Crimea was also commemorated in his title, Tavricheskii. General Diebitsch was honored with the surname Zabalkanskii, signifying the advance of the Russian army

to the very outskirts of the Ottoman capital. However, the Ottoman Empire had based its strategy on containing the Russian advance. Lacking any offensive potential, the Ottomans were unable to rout the invading troops and instead had to wait for their retreat. Unfortunately, however, such a retreat was only forthcoming after the imposition of very harsh treaty conditions or diplomatic, as well as military, intervention by the European powers. Although the Ottomans' wars with their northern neighbor brought humiliation and devastation, Russian military power was never sufficiently studied and analyzed by the Ottomans, who devoted all their energy to domestic reform.

The reasons for the Ottoman army's failures against Russia remain worthy of attention to understand and explain the evolution of Ottoman military power in the 19th century. In this regard, the targets and strategies of both armies will be discussed, with particular emphasis on the weaknesses and strengths of the military establishments of the two rival empires.

4.1.1. The Battleground: the Danube River and the Balkan Range

Throughout its conflicts with Russia, the theater of operations was always Ottoman territory. The Ottoman Empire, completely on the defensive, had to accept the wars on its own lands. In the 18th century, the Russian and the Ottoman armies first met to the north of the Black Sea, and in time the front moved south. Prior to 1774, the border between the two empires was the river Bug. After the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, the new frontiers would be the river Dniestr. Russia acquired Bessarabia and the critical fortresses of İsmail, Kili (Kiliya) and Reni after the Bucharest Treaty of 1812, and the new frontier was then formed by the Prut and the

Danube rivers. The Treaty of Edirne in 1829 awarded Russia the Danube delta and critical rights over the Principalities. The Ottoman fortresses on the left bank of the Danube were all destroyed.²⁰⁴ Russia thus obtained the control over the strategic Danube ports on the Black Sea. Clearly, Russia moved from one river to the next after each encounter. The Russian naval forces also grew stronger over time. Russia acquired Kılburun, Azak, Kerch and Yenikale in the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty, thereby destroying the Ottoman monopoly over the Black Sea trade and becoming a direct threat to the Ottoman capital. However, the true Russian threat would only materialize after the establishment of the port-cities of Odessa and Sevastopol. In brief, Russia - a Black Sea power in 1774 and a Danubian power in 1812 – gradually increased its impact in the region throughout the 19th century. Conversely, the Ottomans lost land and population due to the devastation of the border provinces as a result of years-long wars.

The Russians were much better able to exploit their experiences in previous encounters than the Ottomans. The invading Russian armies consulted the fortress plans and maps prepared in previous encounters.²⁰⁵ By the 19th century, the Russian commanders were already accustomed to the Ottoman Balkans. Mikhail Kutuzov and Pyotr Bagration, who fought alongside Suvorov during the 1787-1792 War, were prominent commanders in 1806-12. Ivan Paskevich and Karl Schilder served in both the 1828-29 and the 1853-56 wars. Eduard Todleben, who was present at the siege of Silistre in 1854, was to command the siege works in front of Plevne in 1877. On the Ottoman side, Abdülkerim Nadir Pasha was one of the most well-known examples of a high level commander who participated in more than one war with Russia. He was

²⁰⁴ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 125-126.

²⁰⁵ Nikolai Alekseievich Yepanchin, *Ocherk pokhoda 1829 g. v Yevropeyskoi Turtsii* (St. Petersburg, 1905), vol. I, p. 330.

the *Müşir* of the Caucasian army during the Crimean War and the commander of the Danubian Front in the 1877-78 War, but he failed in both campaigns. No high-ranking officer in the Ottoman army was able to successfully apply his command experiences in the next Russo-Ottoman war. Although each of the Ottoman wars with its northern neighbor brought devastation to the Empire, the Ottoman government was unable to remedy its failures to obtain information on the military power and strategy of its opponent. Conversely, in addition to the valuable experiences of their officers, the historical accounts, maps and intelligence the Russians retained were helpful in the next encounter.²⁰⁶

Hostilities took place in Bucak, the Principalities and Bulgaria, as well as in the north and south Caucasus. Over time, the Danube became the center of hostilities. Having strengthened the defense of Istanbul, the Ottomans designated Şumnu their headquarters (*meşta-yi hümayun*) and dispatched troops to various fortresses on the Danube. As the Ottomans allocated troops to numerous entrenched positions, the Russians did the same to siege and invest them. The Balkans, a direct route to the Ottoman capital, was the most strategic theater. Thus, the Ottomans were obliged to improve the organization of their armed forces in this region. Undoubtedly, after the enemy crossed the Danube, the Ottoman capital was in a grave danger. Therefore, unsurprisingly, the river Danube was as much a psychological border as it was a strategic one.

Under the conditions of the 1829 Treaty of Edirne, the Ottomans lost the right to construct fortifications in the Principalities. Thereafter, Moldavia and Wallachia were transformed into something of a buffer zone, while the Ottoman defense was

²⁰⁶ Colonel Chesney, *The Russo-Turkish Campaign of 1828 and 1829 with a view of the Present State of Affairs in the East* (New York, 1854), p. 65.

primarily organized in Bulgaria. During hostilities, the Russian headquarters was located in the Principalities, and the Russians governed the territory. Pavel Kiselev in 1828-1834 and Baron Budberg in 1853-1854 ruled the Principalities, where the rich soil and diverse agricultural products of the region facilitated the supply of the Russian army. The Porte and European governments were so accustomed to a Russian presence in the Principalities that the Russian invasion in 1853 was never considered a *casus belli*.

It was not possible to cross the Danube - a wide river with a rapid current – except at a few points, such as Rusçuk-Yergöğü, Silistre-Kalaraş, Tutrakan-Olteniçe, and Vidin-Kalafat. However, the Russian army generally came by way of Satunova-Çatal island-Tulça and other routes through Dobruja where the Ottoman army was unable to take the necessary precautions. This route lacked powerful Ottoman fortifications making it easier for the Russian forces to cross the river via pontoon bridges. After the loss of the İbrail and İsmail fortresses the Ottomans did not venture to construct a fortress in Dobruja of any significance. They allowed the Russian army to move through Dobruja, intending to place the major defensive line in front of Silistre, in addition to that running from the Danube River to the Vidin fortress in the far west. Absent control of the Black Sea, it would have proven extremely difficult to locate and supply a significant force in Dobruja. The southern bank of the Danube is higher than the northern bank, and hence easier to defend. The Ottoman fortresses were also located on the southern bank. Nevertheless, the most important obstacle to an invading army was the Balkan Mountains. Beyond the rugged Balkans, there was no other geographical barrier of significance. (For more information on the geographical characteristics and defensive peculiarities of the region, see, chapter 3.2).

The Russian army succeeded in several battles against the Ottomans, but these victories were not easily won. The wars that began in 1768, 1787 and 1806 all lasted more than five years. For the Russians to achieve victory, it was first necessary to pass through harsh terrain, lay siege to powerful fortresses, defeat several army corps, and then contest diplomatic negotiations. In these wars, the Russians were unable to approach Istanbul, and absent a threat to the Ottoman capital, the Porte was unwilling to sign an unfavorable treaty. The Russian Empire sacrificed substantial blood and treasure in these wars. When explaining the failure to conclude a peace treaty in the 1806-12 War, the British historian Anderson asserts: "But the Turks, in spite of their military weakness, showed their usual stubbornness when there was any question of their having to cede territory."²⁰⁷

Therefore, the Russians sought to act speedily and impose a peace treaty on the Ottomans. Strategies were developed in St. Petersburg to land a heavy and decisive blow on the Ottoman defenses, as the Ottomans had the advantage of geographical depth. The Ottomans trusted in their geographic advantage when the Janissaries revolted in 1807 and in 1828, when they lacked sufficient time to found a new army after the annihilation of the Janissaries.

As the Russian army drove forward, poor roads prevented rapid movement. Meanwhile, the Russian army faced several challenges. Diseases spread among the Russian ranks as a result of the change in climate and lack of food and drugs in a foreign country, killing more troops than the enemy did. Dobruja, a traditional route for the Russians, was not healthy territory. The Russian soldier was not accustomed to the culinary tradition of the Principalities and Bulgaria; white bread was hardly good for the stomach. Therefore, the cost of the Russian army's success on the

²⁰⁷ Anderson, pp. 45-46.

battleground was not a light one. The army of Diebitsch, which had captured Edirne in 1829, was in such a bad condition that any advance toward Istanbul seemed impossible.²⁰⁸ Indeed, in most cases, disease was more of a threat to the Russian army than the Ottomans.

By the 19th century, the geographical depth of the Ottoman state was undergoing a steady decline. Each Russian expansion would in turn hasten the conclusions of subsequent wars and additional territorial losses. Moreover, steamers, trains, the telegraph, and other technological innovations all played a role in making the Ottoman capital more accessible. Therefore, the Danubian theater of the second half of the 19th century was almost entirely different from that of a half century earlier due to changes in logistics and technology.

4.1.2. Military Aims and Strategies

From the end of the 18th century through the War of 1877-78, the chief commonality of confrontations between the Russians and Ottomans was the Ottomans' defensive strategy against a superior enemy. This generalization is also to some extent valid for the Crimean War. It can safely be claimed that the Ottomans had no strategy to regain any previously lost territory, even after the Crimean War.²⁰⁹ The aim was simply to stop the Russians on the borders.

Russia, however, had steadily expanded its territory since the founding of Muscovy. The relative weakness of its neighbors played a role in this process. Khanates, established after the disintegration of the Golden Horde, were integrated

²⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 70-71. Chesney, p. 197.

²⁰⁹ Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir 1-12*, prepared by Cavid Baysun (Ankara, 1991), p. 101.

into the Russian mainland, and a similar fate was shared by various Cossack settlements. Subsequently, Poland, Iran and the Ottoman Empire lost territory to their expanding northern neighbor. Such expansion also occurred to the east, i.e., in Central Asia and the Far East. In a favorable international environment, such as during the reign of Catherine II, Russia acquired vast amounts of territory. Moreover, the Russians had arrived at the very gates of the Ottoman capital in 1829 and 1877, but the threat of Napoleon's army in 1812 and French and British forces in 1854 precluded the Russians from waging a war against the Ottomans in the manner they would have preferred. The loss of Istanbul would, however, might have distorted the valuable balance of power in Europe; therefore, Russia never dared undertake such an initiative.

The aim of Russian Empress Catherine II to establish a Greek Empire, with Istanbul as its capital, provides an excellent picture of the relationship between these two states. Russian Empress christened one of her grandsons Constantine, planning to place him atop the throne of the envisioned Greek state. According to another project, Dacia or the Principalities would be united under the suzerainty of Russia. This state would be ruled by Grigorii Potemkin, one of the favorites of the Empress.²¹⁰ Although these projects and various plans to capture Istanbul proved futile, they clearly displayed the aims and desires of the Russian government. Russia considered the newly acquired territories an opportunity to develop agriculture and trade and expand Russian culture. The names Özü, Turla and Bucak were replaced by Russian or pseudo-Greek names as a clear sign of the Christianization/Russification of the northern shores of the Black Sea and the vast plains, which were then known as Kipchak steppes. These lands were generally

²¹⁰ John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great* (Oxford and New York, 1989), p. 247.

organized under the name of Novorossiya (New Russia), and the borders of New Russia were drawn and re-drawn over the course of the Russo-Ottoman wars and European diplomacy.

However, in the Caucasus, the Russians fought not only against the Ottomans, but also against Iran on the banks of the Caspian Sea and against numerous tribes in the Northern Caucasus. In the Northern Caucasus they advanced by erecting fortress-towns, i.e., Mozdok, Groznyi, and Vladikavkaz, which served as forward outposts. The construction of the Georgian military highway and the protectorate of Georgia further increased Russian influence in the region. Endless fights with mountaineers prepared an army of experienced military units. However, as the Russians had to retain some of these units in the mountains, they were forced to fight the Ottomans with meager forces. Yet victory was always on the side of the Russians.

Each war strengthened the Russians for the next encounter. Conversely, the Ottoman government was only able to repair the previously inflicted damage: it had to rebuild fortifications, equip them with new guns and weapons, and raise new units. The Ottomans lost population and territory and paid large sums in reparations. The first stage of the reformation of the Ottoman army, which accelerated after the wars of 1768-74 and 1787-92, was to continue until 1826 when the Janissary corps was abolished and many of Janissaries were physically annihilated. The military reformation accelerated after the establishment of the new army in 1826, continued until the collapse of the Empire. However, the Ottomans' actions were all *ad hoc* and lacked sound military planning in view of possible moves of the enemy. Military

units, assigned to a vast region, moved as independent units with hardly any proper tactics or organization. Thus each fort was left to its fate during hostilities.

Obviously, the Russian army better analyzed its enemy. As the battles were waged in Ottoman lands, the Russians attached particular importance to ascertaining the topography and making contact with the local Christian population, i.e., Georgians and Armenians in the Caucasus, and Serbians, Greeks and Bulgarians in the Balkans. The Ottomans made scarcely nearly all attempts to research and develop precautions against the Russian threat. Several domestic problems hindered the Ottomans' ability to initiate such a project. Only overwhelming necessity in the event of an imminent war forced them to obtain information on the enemy, generally through contacts in European capitals.²¹¹ Therefore, there was a clear imbalance in the pre-war intelligence efforts of the two antagonists. (See, Chapter 5.1) The Ottomans failed to necessary investments in defensive preparations: the forts and other fortifications were neglected until war appeared imminent. Therefore, the army was not always prepared to respond to a sudden enemy attack. For instance, in 1828 the Russian army passed quickly over Dobruja, and General Gurko easily captured the strategic Shipka pass in 1877.

In short, the Russian army sought to achieve an easy and quick victory to force the Ottomans to come to a favorable agreement. The Ottoman army, in turn, strived to halt the enemy but was rarely able to succeed in forming an organized order of battle.

²¹¹ On the Russian and Ottoman intelligence activities during the war of 1828-29, see Epanchin, vol. I, pp. 128-158. For the conditions of the fortresses in 1828, see *Istoricheskoe opisanie Turetskikh gorodov i krepostei* (Moscow, 1828).

4.1.3. The Armies

During the second half of the 18th century, the Ottoman army, composed of Janissaries and traditional cavalry units, was no match for the Russian army. Protecting the borders of an empire would require a more efficient military organization. In 1826, Janissary corps was annihilated, but the formation of a new army demanded money and time. Unfortunately, however, subsequent wars did not provide such a favorable environment. Although the new Ottoman army was more advanced in many respects, the superiority of the Russian army in terms of quality and quantity could not be overcome.

Manpower was the primary strength of the Russian army. As Russia expanded, the size of its military increased: they were 446,000 soldiers in 1801, 597,000 in 1812, and 859,000 by 1850.²¹² The Russian army had expanded to 31,954 officers and 1,742,343 privates by 1856. When including irregulars, this number rose up to 2,500,000. However, most of them were raw recruits with insufficient training.²¹³ During the Crimean War, Russia was the largest land power in the world while having the lowest equipment and conscription expenses.²¹⁴ In the 19th century, serfdom facilitated the recruitment of soldiers, while the demand for officers was met by the aristocracy, particularly the Baltic Germans. In other words, the Russian army had the capacity to pay for the losses of a war, while the Ottomans gradually lost the potential to build a large army. Staffing the army was to exhaust the Ottoman Muslim population throughout the 19th century.

²¹² John Shelton Curtiss, *Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham, 1965), p. 108; Lyubomir G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkoe voennoe iskusstvo XIX v.* (Moscow, 1974), p. 6; Bruce W. Menning, “The Imperial Russian Army, 1725-1796”, in *The Military History of Tsarist Russia*, prepared by Frederick W. Kagan and Robin Higham (New York, 2002), p. 64.

²¹³ Robert F. Baumann, “The Russian Army 1853-1881”, in *The Military History of Tsarist Russia*, prepared by Frederick W. Kagan ve Robin Higham (New York, 2002), p. 138.

²¹⁴ Chesney, p. 276.

The Ottoman army was numerically small relative to the Russian war machine, but interestingly, in battle it often seemed to have superior numbers. This was the natural result of the structure and formation of the Ottoman military. The bulk of the army was composed of untrained, irregular corps that could easily disperse during battle. Those irregulars, who were not punished for disorderly and mutinous behavior, would then join new military formations. In short, the appearance and disappearance of the irregulars created an inflated image of Ottoman numbers. However, the number of men on the battlefield could not lead to victory if they were simply unqualified and undisciplined warriors.

Even after the establishment of the new army under Mahmud II, the irregulars continued to be the largest component of the Ottoman forces on the battlefield. Moreover, the *redif*, or reserve troops of the new army, were also inferior to the trained *nizam* forces. Obviously, the Ottoman government was more interested in the quantity than the quality of its troops as sheer numbers was a more attainable target, especially during the war. However, such crowds assembled under brief time constraints were no match for a powerful enemy. These undisciplined troops could not hold the line against the discipline and timidity of the enemy, thus also destroying the defensive potential of the regulars. This proved important on the Caucasus front, where the irregulars could not be efficiently employed in the war effort. The difference in the quantities of trained and disciplined troops on the battlefield was thus one of the main reasons for the power imbalance between the Russian and Ottoman armies.

Another difference between these two armies was the Ottomans' desperate need for officers. The system of promotion in the Ottoman Empire was essentially

based on patronage rather than competence. The Ottoman system for promotion and commission was also poorly developed. Therefore, capable commanders were rarely promoted to higher ranks. European observers commented that the quality of an Ottoman officer decreased as his rank increased, because as personal relationships in Istanbul generally determined who would receive higher positions in the army command. Prominent figures in the Ottoman capital could be assigned as *Serasker* or *Kaptan-i Derya* without any concern for their level of professional knowledge, which was a clear sign of a lack of planning by the military hierarchy. Bureaucratic rivalries and personal disagreements could frequently be observed in the Ottoman army and in the other branches of the bureaucracy. On some occasions, commanders failed to come to the aid of their comrades in arms, obviously waiting for their failure. Systemic failures prevented development of the skilled and capable soldiers and commanders necessary to successfully conclude a war, and instead simply delayed the final defeat.

There were sufficient officers holding the rank of *ferik*, but the need for officers in the lower ranks, i.e., *miralay* (colonel) and *binbaşı* (major), was desperate. The Military School (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*) graduated its first class just before the Crimean War. Yet throughout the 19th century, officers from the ranks (*alaylı*) comprised the major section of army command.²¹⁵ Moreover, military theory, strategy and history were never taught adequately; graduates thus only had a basic understanding of engineering. Attempts were made to compensate for the domestic shortage of officers by appointing foreign officers. However, not all European officers were as qualified as Helmuth von Moltke and Adolphus Slade. Many of these officers were also incompetent figures, if not charlatans. Most important, these

²¹⁵ Mesut Uyar ve Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans from Osman to Atatürk* (Santa Barbara, 2009), pp. 148-153.

officers could not assist in the development of a modern Ottoman military. Obviously, the Russian officer corps was much better.

The Ottomans eventually modernized their army; unfortunately, however, they were unable to develop a working modern army. The shortage of officers was only one aspect of the problem. There were several other structural weaknesses. For instance, Ottoman troops were not organized in a real sense into any formation larger than a *tabur* or battalion. The *alay* (regiment) and *liva* (brigade) existed in name only. Different battalions were combined according to wartime demands, and soldiers were strangers to one another were assembled to form an order of battle. There was also little coordination of duties among the various commanders. This means of organizing troops, unsurprisingly, caused various difficulties during battle.

In 1853, the Russian army published a guidebook in Bucharest explaining how to fight the Ottomans. The manual, which comprised 33 articles, explained several weaknesses of the Ottoman forces in detail: “When Turks attack they approach from different directions; they attempt to strike from the rear and wings at once. They believe that they can frighten us by striking from different directions, and act thus in such a foolish way. Therefore, we always defeat Turks on the battlefield.”²¹⁶ It was emphasized that the Russian forces should be arranged in close proximity if possible: “... to protect a position against a Turkish force, which is ten times more powerful than ours, is easier than to retreat from a weaker Turkish force when they attack like eagles.” According to the Russian command, the easiest path to

²¹⁶ *Rukovodstvo dlya boyu protiv Turkov* (Bucharest, 1853), p. 5.

victory was, to wait for an Ottoman attack and then to repulse it in full battle formation.²¹⁷

In the event, small Russian forces in tight formations easily defeated the Ottoman forces, which primarily relied on personal courage. The Ottoman forces were numerically superior to the enemy, but in many cases, they broke and gave ground when facing regular gun and musket fire. Poorly planned maneuvers and grave mistakes on the part of commanders destroyed several initiatives. The Ottoman army command's lack of confidence continued after the establishment of the new army. A report sent to Istanbul, dated 1829, stated that an open battle was dangerous for the Ottomans.²¹⁸ Similarly, in 1853, Ömer Lütfi Pasha, the commander of the Rumelian army, was warned to exercise caution in every action because the state has no other army to protect the Balkan front and the capital.²¹⁹

As a result of the lack of capable commanders and trained cavalry, the Ottomans could not develop offensive operations. Abstaining from an open field battle with the Russians, the Ottoman army was thus completely depended on fortified defenses. If the fortresses fell, thousands of Ottoman defenders would be taken captive and supplies that had been gathered under difficult conditions would be handed over to the enemy.

However, the Ottoman army was better in some respect than its Russian counterpart. In the 18th century, for instance, the Ottoman light cavalry was unparalleled. In the next century, the power of Ottoman guns gradually increased and the Ottoman artillery performed exceptionally in several encounters. In addition, the

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Naci Çakın, *Osmanlı-Rus Harbi (1828-29) Etüt* (Ankara, 1978), p. 139.

²¹⁹ ATASE, k. 46, d. 1, f. 16, 21 Receb 1270 [19 April 1854].

nizam infantry was always praised for its discipline, courage and strength. Moreover, the Ottoman government spent large sums of money when security of the state was at stake: The Ottoman army employed the latest military hardware, as *minié* rifles during the Crimean War and Krupp guns in 1877. The Russian army was also far from perfect: corruption, favoritism, drunkenness, and gambling were some of the major problems in the Russian army command, where incapable officers were widespread. Moreover, the Russian army often initiated campaigns without completing the necessary planning and preparations: the failures against Iran in 1826 and the Ottomans in 1828 were the result of such shortcomings.

The question of why the Ottoman army failed to halt the Russians should be answered by considering several variables, military, economic and political. The military performance of these two states did not only concern the power and capabilities of armies. The active and potential resources of Russia were much greater than what the Ottomans possessed; the Russian army was thus supported by much greater material capabilities. In a period when central authority was in decline, financial discipline was lost, and mismanagement infected many branches of the state, degradation in the army was only an aspect of the Ottomans' systemic troubles. A modern army could be established alongside industrial production, technical schools, transportation, etc. Therefore, the Ottomans' newly established army would not be able to protect the state.²²⁰

²²⁰ Kurat compares the two powers before the 1877-78 War: "The Russian army was superior when compared with the Ottoman-Turkish army with regard to material, drilling, discipline as well as command, and particularly economic and financial conditions of the Russian state could not be compared with the Ottomans, it was thus considered that Turkey would soon be defeated." Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve Rusya* (Ankara, 1990), p. 83.

4.1.4. The Wars

In the last thirty years of the 18th century, the Ottoman state, not only experienced numerous domestic difficulties, but had to wage two long and costly wars against Russia. As these wars clearly revealed, without an army capable of resisting the Russian threat, the security of state was merely a delusion. The reformation and reorganization of the Ottoman army thus accelerated despite the domestic resistance of the Ottoman bureaucracy and the janissaries. Yet reactionary forces were able to succeed in preventing any substantial military reform for decades.

The 1768-74 War was a complete blunder for the Ottomans. It was clear that the Ottoman army lost the initiative on the battlefield. Moldovancı Ali Pasha was defeated before the strategic Hotin fortress in 1769. In the following year, Russian forces commanded by General Rumyantsev demonstrated their superiority on the battlefield, at both Larga and Kartal (Kagul). According to Russian sources, the Russians, who defeated a 50,000 Ottoman infantry and 100,000 cavalry at Kartal, comprised only of 25 thousand men.²²¹ The Ottoman army under the command of old and incapable grand viziers employed improper tactics. Having failed to take the necessary precautions before the war or assist one another in wartime, the Ottoman forts fell one by one. Lacking reinforcements, and as sorties proved to be failures, Hotin, Bender, İsmail, Akkerman, İbrail, and Yergöğü surrendered. Although some of the fortresses, such as İbrail, capitulated on the condition of a free exit, most of them provided large numbers of prisoners for the enemy. At Bender alone, 12,000 Ottoman soldiers were taken prisoner. It was the first time that a Russian army crossed the Danube River. After the war of 1768-74, the Ottoman government assigned much greater importance to the defense of the Danube, and possible

²²¹ Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London, 1981), p. 208.

crossings were fortified. The fortresses of İsmail, İbrail and Silistre, which were significantly improved with advanced defenses, became the keys of the Ottoman resistance on the Danube in subsequent encounters.

Ottoman performance at sea was no better. A Russian fleet, which moved from the Baltic Sea and passed Gibraltar under the command of Graf Aleksei Orlov, encountered Ottoman battleships in the Aegean Sea. In one of these encounters, the Ottoman navy was defeated near the island of Sakız (Chios) and sought shelter in Çeşme bay. The Russians destroyed the Ottoman fleet there, which was not only a sign of the Ottoman negligence, but also of the Russians' sound strategic planning. The Russian navy proved as much a military threat to the Ottomans as the Russian army, despite there being no Russian military port on the Black Sea as yet. Moreover, some islands would remain under Russian occupation until the peace treaty was signed, and the Russians found time to foster strong ties with the Ottoman Greeks. Relations between the Russian army and the Ottoman *reaya* were to develop further during the coming Russo-Ottoman wars, and Russia was to play a major role in the emergence of the independent Balkan states. In the 1806-12 and the 1828-29 wars, the Russian navy would again appear at the gates of the Dardanelles.

The Russian army repeated its success in the War of 1787-92. It captured the fortresses of Hotin, Akkerman, Bender, İsmail and İbrail, where thousands of Ottoman soldiers were lost. At İsmail alone, which fell in 1790, more than 30,000 Ottoman soldiers were slaughtered. Admittedly, the ruthlessness of General Suvorov was no less responsible than his successes on the battlefield. The Ottoman forces were also defeated in the open, at Fokşan and Rymnik. The Russo-Ottoman confrontation had for the first time extended to the Caucasus in a real sense. After the

loss of the Crimea, the Ottomans strengthened the fortresses of Anapa and Soğucak to prevent any Russian move toward the south. However, these strong forts also proved incapable of hindering the Russian advance. Anapa fell, and Battal Pasha's expedition on the banks of the Kuban River ended scandalously. The site would later be named after the defeated Ottoman Pasha Battal Pasha, hence - Batalpashinsk. After the Treaty of Jassy in 1792, the Porte accepted the Russian annexation of the Crimea, and thus the northern shore of the Black Sea was totally lost.

On the eve of the 19th century, the unparalleled rise of Napoleon changed the European map dramatically. He represented a grave danger for both Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and they therefore agreed to an alliance in 1798 and in 1805. Nevertheless, due to the political volatility of the era, a new Russo-Ottoman war broke out in 1806. As in the previous encounters, the Hotin, Bender, Akkerman and Anapa fortresses soon fell into the hands of the Russians. The Ottoman forces were defeated at Obileshti in 1807 by General Mikhail Miloradovich. Moreover, the resistance of the forts of İsmail and İbrail was also broken. The Russian army was then active on both the right and left banks of the Danube River. The struggle also continued in the South Caucasus. The hostilities in Kars and Ahıská demonstrated the wide geographic expanse of the conflict.

Alexander I, the Russian tsar, assigned several of his commanders to end the prolonged hostilities: Miloradovich, Prozorovskiy, Bagration, Kamenskiy and Mikhail Kutuzov commanded the Russian army. General Kutuzov, after defeating the Ottoman forces in 1811, returned to the north of Danube. In an attempt to rout the Russians, the Ottoman forces under the command of Ahmed Pasha crossed the Danube into Wallachia. However, unexpectedly for the Ottomans, the Russians

captured Rusçuk, cut the Ottomans' contacts with their rear, and established a proper blockade of the Ottoman forces in Slobodze. Having faced the winter cold, 12,000 Ottoman soldiers were forced to surrender to the enemy. The Russians thus neutralized a large portion of the Ottoman army without fighting a battle.²²² This was the last significant move of the Ottomans toward the north bank of the Danube River.

By 1812, the Russians had captured Rusçuk and Silistre on the Danube, and Sohumkale and Soğucak in the Caucasus and thereby demonstrated their strength on both fronts. Moreover, the Russian navy, active in the Aegean Sea under the command of Admiral Senyavin, appeared in front of the Dardanelles. While one of the Russian fleets threatened the Dardanelles, the light fleet active in the Danube achieved successes in front of Rusçuk and Silistre. Moreover, an attack on Istanbul was discussed as a military option in the Russian capital. However, the prolonged war ended in view of the imminent French threat in 1812, and Russia agreed to sign the Treaty of Bucharest, by which it acquired Bessarabia and secured Serbian autonomy. It was the last war in which the Janissaries fought.

After a few years Napoleon was defeated and Russian troops were among the Allied armies that entered Paris. Russia then acted as the gendarmerie of Europe, and suppressed any idea of revolution or change. However, its conservatism did not extend to the Ottoman lands. Therefore, and unsurprisingly, the Greek revolt and subsequent events ignited a new Russo-Ottoman war. The Ottomans, lacking a real army in 1828, were nonetheless able to stop the Russian forces.

²²² According to Beskrovnyi, a famous Soviet historian, the Russian operation in Rusçuk in 1811 was one of the best examples of the Russian tactical and intelligence superiority. Beskrovnyi, *Russkoe voennoe iskusstvo XIX v.*, pp. 76- 77.

In the spring of 1828, a Russian army of 115,000 men under the command of Peter Wittgenstein was deployed in the Principalities. Isakçı and Tulça were unable to mount a defense, and the Russians easily crossed the Danube and passed Dobruja. Maçin, Hirsova, and Köstence were quickly invaded; the invaders secured ammunition and supplies. The fortress of İbrail, however, repulsed the Russians and and heavy casualties. The fortresses of Siliște and Varna were also firmly defended. The garrisons made several sorties to disrupt the enemy. However, with no reinforcements on the way, the defenders ceded İbrail on the condition of free passage to Siliște. As the Ottoman navy was destroyed at Navarin in 1827, the Russians enjoyed complete control over the Black Sea and were able to provide total logistical support to the Russian land army via the Black Sea. Enjoying the support of its navy, the Russian army captured the fortress of Varna, where 6,000 Ottoman soldiers including Yusuf Pasha were taken prisoner. The capitulation of Varna, which cost more than 5,000 casualties, was the Russians' only significant success in 1828.

In 1829, General Diebitsch took command of the Russian army, while the Ottoman command was entrusted to Mehmed Reşid Pasha. The Russians were able to capture Siliște after only the third siege attempt. A total 6,500 men were taken prisoner, and Ottoman casualties totaled approximately 9,000 men, killed and wounded. The Russians took more than 250 guns in the capture of this fortress. A proper blockade of Şumnu, Ottoman army headquarters, proved difficult, as the outer redoubts were spread over an extensive area. Therefore, the Russian army, having left some forces before Şumnu to monitor the fortress, preferred to advance. Meanwhile, the Ottoman army suffered a heavy defeat at Külefçe, where blunders in open battle were evident. The Russians, who could not be defeated in any significant

encounter, did not halt until their arrival at the city of Edirne. Moreover, Edirne, occupying a strategic location on road to Istanbul, surrendered without making any effort at defense. Such was the situation in the Balkans. In the Caucasus, the active Russian army comprised only 20,000 men. Such a small force proved sufficient to proceed as far as the city of Erzurum. Ottoman military's performance in the Caucasus was much worse than in the Balkans.

The presence of Russian troops in Edirne caused a panic in the capital. However, the army's ranks, diminished by disease, were hardly capable of posing a threat to Istanbul. Nevertheless, the Treaty of Edirne was signed in line with Russian demands. This treaty provided for the foundation of a Greek state, and the Ottomans lost their rights to the eastern Black Sea coast. Moreover, the control of the Danube delta was ceded to Russia. All forts and fortifications north of the Danube River were destroyed, never to be re-built. Russia achieved Greek independence, guaranteed greater rights for the Serbians, and increased its influence over the Principalities, thereby further approached Istanbul.

This war also demonstrated that the Russians were capable of coming to the gates of Istanbul. However, it also revealed that such a daring move could annihilate the invading army. The troops, detached from the logistical centers, were subject to fatal diseases due to heat and a lack of food and water. Therefore, an invading army, having defeated the Ottoman forces and passed through harsh geographical conditions, could arrive at the gates of Istanbul with thinned battalions.

The Russians, who could not be stopped in 1828-29, arrived at Edirne, but they also understood that the Ottoman fortresses and the climate of Bulgaria would not be easily overcome. It took the Russians two years and tens of thousands of casualties to

advance through Bulgaria. With difficulty, Silistre was forced to capitulate, while Şumnu remained in Ottoman hands. The surrender of other Ottoman fortifications (as in the example of Edirne) was the result of Russian diplomacy or Ottoman failures rather than a strategically planned victory. It was clear that Russia needed a large army in the Balkans to advance to Istanbul.

In brief, the Ottomans struggled against an army that was superior in many respects. Tactical blunders in battle played a role in Ottoman defeats, and numerous defensive advantages could not be exploited to a sufficient extent. Bearing in mind that the material capabilities of the Russian government were much greater than those of the Ottomans, the possibility of Russian success in a prolonged war was high. While Russia could find solutions to its many mistakes and shortcomings by sending additional forces or changing commanders, the Porte was hard pressed to formulate any strategy that would lead to ultimate success. After the second half of the 18th century, each Russo-Ottoman confrontation resulted in the loss of some portion of Ottoman territory. Russia not only gained new lands but also imposed the material costs of war on the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, each war further weakened the Ottomans, and after each one, the Russian army gradually approached nearer to Istanbul.

The Ottoman army, remade after the fashion of the Western military science, would find opportunities to prove itself in domestic disturbances. For two decades, the Sublime Porte struggled with Egypt under Mehmed Ali Pasha, the Montenegrins, the Bosnians, the Kurds and the Druzes. At the end of October 1853, after twenty-four peaceful years, war erupted between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, on the usual fronts of Russo-Ottoman confrontation, i.e., the Danube and the Caucasus.

This would be the new army's first real experience against the empire's archenemy. However, in this case, hostilities would evolve into a European conflict following declarations of war by France and Britain on Russia in the spring of 1854. Shortly thereafter, in early September 1854, the Ottomans' allies, who had their own agenda of destroying the Russian naval base at Sevastopol, initiated an expedition on the Crimean peninsula. Following the evacuation of the Principalities by the Russian army, all efforts were concentrated at Sevastopol. After the bloody, pitched battles on the Crimea (Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman, Gözleve, and Chernaya), a year-long siege of Sevastopol, and other minor encounters at Kerch and Kılburun, the Russians accepted the peace terms stipulated by the Allied powers at Paris. The Russian threat to Ottoman lands ceased for a few decades, and the Ottomans succeeded against the Russian army for the first time in nearly a century. Nevertheless, the Crimean War was not a classical Russo-Ottoman War, and most of the credit for the victory should be given to the French and British armies.

4.2. Theatre of War: A Familiar Geography

The Principalities and Bulgaria were not *terra incognita* for Russia or the Ottoman Empire. By the mid-nineteenth century, these rival armies had been fighting on this landscape for one century and a half. Although these regions were under Ottoman rule, St. Petersburg took great pains to study the region, as each war offered an opportunity for in-depth research. Advances in topography and statistics would only furnish more reliable maps and population surveys in the second half of the 19th century, and which would not be available until the 1877-78 War. Nevertheless, the actual state of the Balkan passes, military highways, and the Ottoman Empire's

defensive preparations were well known to the Russian government by the commencement of the Crimean War.

4.2.1. Landscape: Wallachia, Bulgaria, and Dobruja

The Ottoman army enjoyed numerous advantages at the beginning of the war. The proximity and parallel direction of the Danube and the Balkans formed a natural military advantage for the Ottoman Empire. Moltke well summarizes the importance of geography for the Ottoman system of defense: “The walls of the fastnesses, the Danube, and the Balkan, the impenetrable nature of the country, the want of subsistence and of means of transport, the climate and pestilence, were the only allies of the Turks.”²²³ The south bank of the Danube commanded the right; it was thus easily defended. The Balkans, the most important barrier to the invader, could only be traversed through a few passages and practicable roads to move further to the south. In the event of a Russian defeat in the Balkan range, active pursuit by the Ottoman troops could have cut the Russian army off from its bridges, and it would thus be inevitably lost. Therefore, Russia’s aim was to advance across Eastern Bulgaria, where the great mountain range ends, as it had reached Edirne in the previous war.²²⁴

The width of the Danube and the dryness of its banks were important in determining where to cross. One of the best crossings on the Danube was from Satunova to İsakçı. The Ottomans had also used this route in their northern campaigns. İsakçı offered another important advantage for an invading army by

²²³ Moltke, p. 21.

²²⁴ In the next Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78, the Russian army was to follow a different strategy and move through the highest section of the Balkan barrier.

providing cover on both right and left flanks, as it is located between the Danube River and the Black Sea.²²⁵ Throughout Bulgaria and Wallachia, the Danube is extremely wide, in many places over a kilometer in breadth. Thus the river could only be crossed by means of boats or pontoon bridges. The natural obstacles afforded by the river to the passage of troops were supported by a number of Ottoman strongholds on the right bank: Vidin, Niğbolu, Ziştovi, Rusçuk, Tutrakan, Silistre, Hirsova, Maçin, İsakçı, and Tulça, all situated at points where the Danube might otherwise have been crossed.

As the first barrier to the Russian advance was the Danube River, and the Principalities, located to the north of the river, were open to the invading Russian troops. Despite sharing a common religion with the Russians, the Wallachians were not pro-Russian as the previous campaigns had demonstrated that a Russian occupation was no better than Ottoman rule.²²⁶ The suppression of the 1848 Revolution in Little Wallachia also provoked anti-Russian sentiment among the local population. Yet with no resistance from the inhabitants, the Russians were confident of “the resources to be derived from this province, and thanks to the inexhaustible bounty of nature,” as they had been in the previous war.²²⁷ During the Crimean War, a tolerable supply of corn and cattle for food and an abundance of hay were at the disposal of the Russian army. The only exception was Little Wallachia, the west of Wallachia between the Aluta River and Hungary, which was not under the Russian control because the territory was too remote from the base of Russian military operations.

²²⁵ Petrov, vol. I, p. 127.

²²⁶ Moltke, p. 32.

²²⁷ Moltke, pp. 32-33.

Bulgaria, the territory between the Danube and the Balkan range, was as rich in supplies as Wallachia. Besides a production of immense crops of corn and other grains, there were abundant resources of cattle and sheep. In Bulgaria, the military cities, i.e. Sumnu and Silistre, were predominantly Muslim. The region of Deli Orman, or the Wild Forest region, also featured a Muslim population that possessed a fighting spirit. However, the north of the Balkans, with the exception of the cities and fortresses, was principally Orthodox Christian. The local population of European Turkey, which was predominantly Orthodox, was always considered an encumbrance for the Ottomans. Most of the Slavic peoples of the Ottoman Empire regarded the Russian Empire as their protector. This was also one of the main reasons for the war. The Emperor Nicholas I did not wish to lose his prestige and power among the Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Russians were unable to find an opportunity to play the nationality card in the Balkans during the Crimean War. (See, chapter 5.3)

Bulgaria and Wallachia were wealthy territories, and thus the local populations were far from poor. Thus, the armies could be well supplied in the region. Cunningham, the British vice-consul at Kalas (Galatz), expresses the financial conditions of the Bulgarian peasants.

The material position of the Bulgarian Christian Peasantry is probably better than the position of the Peasantry of any country in Europe. Their cottages are sufficiently large and comfortable; it is true they have no furniture in them excepting two or three copper pots for cooking and some quilts for sleeping on and covering themselves with at night. They are well and warmly clothed with home made cloth. They have oxen for the Plough and cows to give milk, besides sheep & abundance of Poultry, Fowls, Turkeys, Geese & Ducks, also wheat flour for Bread. In no place during my late tour did I observe any scarcity of any of these articles. No doubt I was generally lodged in the best and richest house in the village, but still I could see the yards of the other houses equally well stocked. It must also be observed that the country people are all equal, each having his portion of land around the village and cultivating

it in families. There are no Gentlemen Farmers and no labourers. No proprietors excepting some Turkish Beys.²²⁸

The climate of Dobruja, the region between the lower Danube and the Black Sea, was differed from those in the Principalities and Bulgaria. Thinly populated Dobruja, a traditional route of the Russian army to the right bank of the Danube River, was experiencing shortages of all types of supplies. The region thus presented substantial obstacles for the Russians. As Dobruja was entirely without springs or streams, and there was hardly any land under cultivation, it was difficult to find water and supplies. On many occasions, this unhealthy region proved more dangerous for the Russian army than the Ottoman defenders. According to Chesney, the most important impediment to the advance of the Russian army was to supply its forces in a country where most of the provinces were thinly populated and the roads were generally impracticable. “Therefore”, he notes, “the supply of the army rather than the march of the soldier is the question to be solved for a further move of the invading army through the Balkan passes.”²²⁹

The variability in the weather conditions had also a treacherous effect on the health of troops. Authors of a book on the military geography of the Balkans were right in claiming that “The records of the various campaigns in Bulgaria are filled with accounts of the decimation of armies by disease.”²³⁰ Four seasons had all their own threats on the life of the soldiers:

²²⁸ “Charles Cunningham to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, on the general state of the Christians in Bulgaria, Galatz, 9 February 1855”, The National Archives, London (Hereafter TNA) FO 195-444, p. 338.

²²⁹ Chesney, pp. 53-54.

²³⁰ Lionel W. Lyde and A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, *A Military Geography of the Balkan Peninsula* (London, 1905), p. 68.

The low swampy ground in the vicinity of the Danube is unhealthy in the summer months; and here, as also in the Balkans, the great difference of temperature between day and night would be likely to cause much sickness among troops in the field. When the autumn rains fall (September), the parched-up country gives forth a steamy heat; and the decaying vegetation washed down by the streams pollutes the water and the air. Later in the year, when the rain gives place to snow, the climate, though more healthy, becomes, especially in the mountains, extremely severe. At all seasons the health of troops operating in the country must, therefore, be a source of great anxiety, for, unless well fed and well clothed, the men will rapidly succumb to sunstroke, diarrhea, fevers, and other ailments.²³¹

4.2.2. Balkan Passes and Military Highways

Throughout the Balkans, the roads were nearly impassable in wet seasons, a logistical impediment for both invading and defending armies. Therefore, a military operation of any significance could only be carried out in the spring or summer.

The Greater Balkans, the mountains from the Serbian frontier to the Black Sea, had only a few passages through which an army could advance. One of the major passes was İhtiman or Trajan's Gate in the Greater Balkans on the road from Belgrade, through Sofia and Filibe to Istanbul. The other significant pass was Dobral in Eastern Bulgaria, on the road from Silistre and Şumnu to İslimye and Karinabad. The mountain passes in the Greater Balkans, beginning at Tirnova, should be considered secondary as they were impracticable for a large army and presented difficulties to maintaining the lines of supply and communication.²³² The handful number of passages through the Balkans limited the options available to an invading army and increased the ability of the defending forces to mount a resistance. The easiest route in terms of geography was obviously through the Little Balkans from

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² However, in 1877 in the following Russo-Ottoman encounter, the Russians would use this road and capture Shipka pass to avoid having to capture the Ottoman fortresses.

Şumnu, Pravadi or Varna. It was the weakest region in terms of natural defenses. However, the Ottoman quadrilateral fortresses represented a man-made barrier to prevent the movement of any foreign army through eastern Bulgaria. Therefore, before marching through the region, the fortresses of Varna and Şumnu needed be captured or screened.²³³ In 1828 and 1829, the Russian forces operated along the line from Silistre to Edirne. This was the shortest and most direct route to the Ottoman capital and seemed the most natural to the Russian army, which was supported by a fleet in the Black Sea.²³⁴

1. Trajan's Gate (İhtiman): From Belgrade to Constantinople through Sofia and Filibe
2. Şipka Gate: From Tırnova to Filibe through Şipka
3. Iron Gate (Demir Kapu): From Tırnova to İslimye
4. Kazan Gate: From Şumnu to Edirne through İslimye
5. Dobral Gate (Boğaz): From Şumnu to Edirne through Çalikavak and Karinabad
6. Nadir Derbent (Kırkgeçit): From Varna and Pravadi to Edirne through Aydos

4.2.3. Fortresses

As Moltke rightly asserts, “At all events the Turks in Bulgaria could rely upon nothing but the fortified towns on the Danube and along the mountainous range of the Balkan.”²³⁵ However, during the Crimean War, the Ottomans did not have any powerful fortresses at their disposal, save Şumnu, that could long resist the Russian army. Varna, Silistre or Rusçuk, although they were first-class military fortifications, were not sufficiently powerful to halt a resolute enemy for long. The guns in the

²³³ Chesney, pp. 58-61; Yepanchin, vol. I, p. 361.

²³⁴ For the mountain passes, see A. Jochmus, “Notes on a Journey into the Balkan, or Mount Haemus, in 1847”, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, vol. 24 (1854), pp. 36-85. Lyde and Mockler-Ferryman, pp. 48-69; Prim, pp. 116-121.

²³⁵ Moltke, p. 36.

fortifications were old, and the batteries required repair. Throughout the summer of 1853, the Ottomans attempted to ameliorate the defensive weaknesses of the fortresses.

Muslim population near the frontiers was capable of bearing arms. The Muslims residing in the Danubian fortress towns were also drilled in canonry. Artillerymen, who were sent from Gelibolu and Istanbul, tutored them.²³⁶

In the numerous wars waged against their time-honored rival, the Ottomans lost several of their strategic and powerful fortresses, i.e., Özü, İsmail, Hotin and Bender. As the Ottomans were already on the defensive, the fortresses that fell under the Russian control lost their strategic importance and played little role in subsequent campaigns. The Edirne Treaty of 1829 also forbade the construction of any fortifications in the Principalities; therefore, the once powerful fortresses of Ibrail and Yergögi also lost their military significance. Thus by the Crimean War, all of the important fortresses in the Balkans were located on the south bank of the Danube River. Vidin, Rusçuk and Silistre on the Danube, Şumnu in front of the Balkan range, and Varna on the shores of the Black Sea were the key Ottoman fortifications during the Crimean War.

The strongest fortress of the Balkans was Şumnu - a well-fortified entrenched camp in a valley, capable of accommodating a large army. Its position, means of communication, and armament enable it to guard all the eastern passes. It is surrounded, to the north-west and south, by heights and to the east by a marshy ravine, which empties into the Kamchik River. Prim states that there were eighteen

²³⁶ “Bulgaria, Rustchuk, 29 December (From our Special Correspondent)”, *The Times*, 7 February 1854.

redoubts with 280 guns, of which 210 were high caliber.²³⁷ Interestingly, Captain Rhodes, who visited Şumnu with General Prim, observed that there were twenty-three redoubts and a deep ditch protecting the town.²³⁸ There were twenty-five thousand inhabitants, most of whom were Muslim. The garrison consisted of twenty-five thousand Ottoman troops.²³⁹ There were two barracks in Şumnu, one for the infantry, and one for the cavalry, and a hospital, all built of stone.²⁴⁰ In the words of Macintosh, “Shumla is regarded as the strongest position in the Balkan range. It stands at the junction of several roads, which converge in that direction from the right bank of the Danube, and at the mouth of the two principal passes over the Balkans, as well as at the head of the valleys through which the Pravadi and Kamchik rivers flow towards the Black Sea”.²⁴¹ Şumnu, being in the direct line to Istanbul, had hitherto been the usual rendezvous for Ottoman forces. However, Şumnu suffers from the disadvantage of being a nearly open town surrounded by a chain of redoubts and other defenses, and as a fortified position, required a large body of men to defend it. In 1829, the Russian not only cut off communications between Şumnu and Adrianople, but also crossed the mountains and marched there. However, if the passes had been properly fortified and moderately defended, this might have been prevented. Attempts made at that time to invest the city were, after considerable loss, forced to be abandoned.

The fortress of Silistre was located at a highly strategic position. It was on the flank of every possible line of operation against the Balkans. However, the fortress was below a commanding ridge, and even the interior could be viewed from the

²³⁷ Prim, p. 188.

²³⁸ Rhodes, p. 89.

²³⁹ Rhodes, p. 90.

²⁴⁰ Jochmus, p. 78.

²⁴¹ Macintosh, p. 98.

surrounding hills. As Chesney notes, “not only was the position bad, the works were bad also. The wall was low, the ditches were shallow, the flanking fire ineffective.” Therefore, during the Crimean War the main defense was not the fortress itself but the outer redoubts, particularly to the east and south of Silistre. One of those was the Arab Tabya, and over the course of the military confrontation on the Danube it came to play a principal role in Ottoman efforts to resist the Russian advance. According to Woods, “the town was ill provided for a siege – its fortifications, constructed in the old style, were sometimes ill placed, and always out of repair.”²⁴² A European officer described Arab Tabya as “technically speaking, nothing more than a flèche, consisting of a front some fifty paces in length, with flanks about the same extent, thrown back at a sharp angle. The rear is entirely open, and was never even palisaded.”²⁴³

Varna was the most important fortification in the Ottoman Balkans on the Black Sea coast. After the war of 1828-1829 the fortress was not much strengthened. According to Jochmus, the weakest side of the fortress was the north-eastern angle, as it was exposed to a naval attack.²⁴⁴

Rusçuk was one of the three significant Ottoman fortresses on the Danube along with Silistre and Vidin. It was the weakest, despite its well developed trade and population of 50,000. In the words of a British observer, “Rustchuk has neither the systematic fortifications of Silistre, nor the freedom from territorial disadvantages of Widdin, and still less the strong natural position of Shumla.”²⁴⁵ Said Mirza Pasha, the

²⁴² Woods, pp. 80-81.

²⁴³ Quoted in Edward Henry Nolan, *The Illustrated History of the Present War against Russia*. (London, 1857), p. 221.

²⁴⁴ Jochmus, p. 85.

²⁴⁵ “Bulgaria, Rustchuk, 29 December (From our Special Correspondent)”, *The Times*, 7 February 1854.

governor of the Province of Silistre, also seated at Rusçuk. He was a well-known magnate in Ottoman local government. At the outbreak of war, the fortifications of Rusçuk were improved, which transformed the town “from an old tumbledown Turkish fortress into a European one on the most scientific principles.”²⁴⁶ The correspondent of the *Times* obviously exaggerated the improvement showing the euphoria of the time.

There were seven bastioned fronts, and the citadel and arsenal were located in the western section of the Vidin fortress. Kalafat, a *tete de pont*, was also important for the defense of Vidin. Lom, Niğbolu, Ziştovi, Hırova, Maçin, Tulça, and İsakçı were secondary fortresses on the Danube located at elevated sites to prevent any Russian passage to the south of the Danube. While the defensive Ottoman army enjoyed these advantages in every encounter with the Russians, there were others that were of particular use in the Crimean War. For instance, in contrast to previous Russo-Turkish wars, Russia did not have a naval preponderance in the Black Sea, even following the destruction of an Ottoman fleet in front of Sinop because of the entrance of the French and British navies onto the Black Sea. Therefore, the Russian command faced numerous problems supplying its army in the Principalities.²⁴⁷ Gorchakov considered the Russians to be in a more difficult situation in 1853 than during the previous war, as French and British aid was imminent. According to Gorchakov, even if the Russian army were able to arrive at Istanbul, it would not be possible to invade the city due to French and British assistance.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ “Bulgaria, Rustchuk, 29 December (From our Special Correspondent)”, *The Times*, 7 February 1854.

²⁴⁷ See, for example, A. Polivanov, *Ocherk prodrovostvovaniia russkoi armii na pridunaiskom teatre v kampanii 1853-54 i 1877* (St. Petersburg, 1894).

²⁴⁸ “Zapiski Gorchakova”, I. 50.

4.3. Ottoman and Russian Armies on the Eve of the Crimean War: Aims and Potential

On the eve of the Crimean War, the Russians were well informed regarding the details of the Ottoman army. The total military forces, the commanders, and the conditions of the fortifications were properly reported to the Russian capital via a military agent in Istanbul. There was also a growing body of literature in Russia pertaining to the topography of the Balkans and the Caucasus.²⁴⁹ Books or booklets, especially penned by the European officers who served in the Ottoman army, were useful.²⁵⁰ Accordingly, by the commencement of the war the tsar and his commanders were well-versed with regard to the Ottoman army, the conditions of fortifications in the Balkans and military highways to Istanbul. In view of the information that they possessed, the Russians considered their military power sufficient to march on Istanbul in a favorable international environment despite the recent modernization of the Ottoman army.

By contrast, the Ottomans, throughout two decades of peace, were devoid of any mechanism to attain detailed information on the Russian army. The Ottoman government might have employed the Ottoman embassies in European capitals or the traditional gateway to the European diplomacy—the various diplomatic agents and

²⁴⁹ The articles of Ivan P. Liprandi, the Russian military agent in the Ottoman Empire in 1827, and a participant of the 1828-1829 war on the Danubian front, included important details on the topography and population of the Ottoman Balkans. See, for instance, *Obozrenie prostranstva, sluzhivshego teatrom voiny Rossii s Turtsiei s 1806 po 1812 god* (St. Petersburg, 1854). Although the book was originally prepared in 1841, it was only published during the Crimean War. Many other works of Liprandi would be published during the 1877-78 war.

²⁵⁰ The Russian mission in Berlin translated and dispatched to the Russian capital some parts of *Zustand der Turkei im Jahre der Prophezeiung 1853*, a book written by the Prussian officer Hubert von Boehn. RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 27.

spies in Istanbul. Nevertheless, the Ottomans did not possess an embassy, let alone a military agent, in Russia. The Porte attempted to obtain information regarding the enemy forces only after the escalation of the diplomatic crisis in 1853 and intensified its activities when the Ottoman borders were threatened by the Russian invasion of the Principalities. In fact, the Ottomans, who were eminently preoccupied with the reform process and domestic problems, were not in a position to afford sufficient energy for the evaluation of the Russian military power, although it was a direct menace to the survival of the empire. Accordingly, there was no notable effort to translate foreign literature pertaining to the Russian military establishment. The future commanders of the Ottoman army might have been familiar with only common facts on Russia obtained during their education in the military schools. Such an imbalance in information gathering and dissemination may have caused serious troubles in a sudden war. Luckily for the Ottomans, the diplomatic rupture before the commencement of the hostilities reserved sufficient time to prepare their army and to learn more about the enemy. The pro-Ottoman diplomatic atmosphere in Europe was also a valuable asset in covering military and intelligence gaps (see, chapter 5.1.).

With regard to information gathering and data processing, the Ottoman performance was poor even in the case of their own army. The lack of a central organ, such as general staff to process data produced by various branches of the army, was likely the main reason for ambiguity in the operation of military forces. This uncertainty might have also been a deliberate choice because it could offer a convenient environment for corruption, which was a common practice in nearly every branch of the Ottoman bureaucracy. Regardless of the reason, many of the commanders were themselves uncertain, if not totally ignorant, of the number of the Ottoman troops under their own command. General Lüders, the Russian commander

in Wallachia in 1849, sent information regarding the Ottoman troops, which was largely obtained from the Russian Foreign Ministry agents and the Russian spies, to the Russian Ministry of War. Nevertheless, General Lüders added the inaccessibility of any type of useful information through the Ottoman army in Wallachia. Although some of the Ottoman commanders did not convey information to the Russians because of their mistrust, most officers were themselves ignorant of the formation of their own army.²⁵¹ Another example is more striking. Questions regarding the number and quality of Ottoman troops were asked to the high-ranking generals in one of the grand councils shortly before the Ottoman declaration of war, but the generals merely gave vague answers at this critical juncture.²⁵²

Consequently, documents containing numbers and comprehensive lists of army units were rare in the Ottoman official records. Ironically, the number of Ottoman forces could be more safely determined by relying on foreign sources, including the Russians. Thus, statistical information given by European authors or in the memoirs of European officers serving in the Ottoman army are helpful in analyzing the workings of the Ottoman army. For instance, the reports of Count Osten-Sacken, the Russian military agent in Istanbul, are among the most reliable sources of results of the Ottoman military reformation on the eve of the Crimean War.

State almanacs (*salnâme*) included only the top assignments; there was unfortunately no other source to give a full list of Ottoman officers during the Crimean War. It was only in 1865-1866 that a comprehensive record of the Ottoman military command was prepared; in this record, officers including all ranks from *müşir* to *mülâzim-i sâni* (lieutenant) together with those officials who were assigned

²⁵¹ RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 30, l. 2.

²⁵² *Mesâil*, pp. 317-319.

to military duties were registered.²⁵³ In fact, without a useful register, it is extremely difficult to follow the Ottoman commanders, most of whom shared the same names. Even worse, European officers in the Ottoman service were also re-christened with traditional Muslim names. Consequently, confusion regarding commanders has been common in the military literature. Without any information regarding the regiment, titles or appellations, it is nearly impossible to identify commanders. In fact, the nicknames were signs of significance to distinguish the Ottoman commanders. Furthermore, there is still no noteworthy source to consult for the biographies of the Ottoman commanders.²⁵⁴

Although there are separate histories of various battalions of the European armies, the formation and activities of the Ottoman battalion remain a mystery. Daily check-lists convey only fragmentary information regarding certain battalions or regiments in a certain period.²⁵⁵ Official reports primarily included vague accounts, especially pertaining to the structure of the forces, referring simply to the number of battalions rather than the number of soldiers. The military journal of the war was also rudimentary and disappointing with respect to explaining the movements of the army units.²⁵⁶ Most importantly, the muteness of the Ottoman soldier, who left almost no diary or reminiscences, makes it difficult to understand and analyze details regarding the Ottoman warfare.

²⁵³ *Salnâme-i Askeriyye*, vol. I (Istanbul, 1282 [1865-1866]).

²⁵⁴ *Sicill-i Osmani* gives short biographies of the Ottoman commanders, but this information is insufficient for any evaluation of the capabilities of the Ottoman military class during the Crimean War.

²⁵⁵ “*Ordu-yu Hümâyûn’un birlik ve kurumlarının günlük yoklama ve iaşe mevcud cedvelleri*” They are available in various files in the ATASE archive.

²⁵⁶ *Kırımlı Harbi Hakkında Bir Ruznâme*, Library of Turkish Historical Association (Ankara).

4.3.1. The Ottoman Army of *Tanzimat*

The Ottoman military forces during the Crimean War were composed of four different branches: regular and reserve armies, contingents, and irregulars. The regular army—*Muallem Asâkir-i Mansure-i Muhammediyye* (Trained Victorious Muhammedan Soldiers)—was founded after the annihilation of the Janissary corps in June 1826. However, the early period of the first regular army was not a success story. As the *Mansure* army was transformed into the *Asâkir-i Nizamiyye-i Şâhâne* (Imperial Regular Army—this name was officially introduced in 1841) of the Crimean War, lessons had already been learned from the defeats against Russia in 1828-1829 and against Mehmed Ali Pasha, in 1833 and in 1840. By 1834, there were two types of military service—regular and reserve—in the example of the Prussian *Landwehr*. The reserve army was named *Asâkir-i Redife-i Şâhâne*, or simply *redif*. *Redif* would maintain order in the countryside in peacetime and would fight in wartime along with the *nizam*. Certainly, the new army was the one that the Ottomans had long sought. However, in 1853, the process of building a modern military establishment remained incomplete, and according to most of the observers, the Ottomans were not yet ready to fight against the arch-enemy.²⁵⁷

The annihilation of the janissaries was not completely affirmative for the Ottoman state and society. This event revealed a military and social vacuum that was difficult to compensate in the short term. Furthermore, the destruction of the traditional standing army and the reforms of *Tanzimat* alienated various Muslim groups who would take a reactionary stand. Bosnia, for instance, not only

²⁵⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, “The Ottoman Conscription System in Theory and Practice, 1844-1918”, in *Arming the State: Military Conscription in the Middle East and Central Asia 1775-1925*, Erik J. Zürcher (ed.) (London, 1999), p.

insufficiently contributed to the defense of the Empire against Russia in 1828-1829 and 1853-1856, but also became a troublesome region as a result of several revolts.

The Ottoman army of the 1850s was a product of an 1843 decree (*Tensikât-i celile-i Askeriyye*) and an 1846 law of recruitment (*Kur'a Nizamnâmesi*). The five corps established in 1843 would be followed by the sixth in 1848. Thus, on the eve of the Crimean War, the Ottoman government enjoyed a European-style regimental army that was composed of six corps, each commanded by a *Müşir*.²⁵⁸

	Headquarters
The 1 st (<i>Hassa</i> or the Guards) Army	Üsküdar and İzmir
The 2 nd (<i>Dersaadet</i>) Army	Istanbul and Ankara
The 3 rd (Rumelian) Army	Manastr
The 4 th (Anatolian) Army	Harput
The 5 th (Arabian or Syrian) Army	Damascus and Aleppo
The 6 th (Iraq and Hejaz) Army	Baghdad and Hejaz

Ottoman army corps²⁵⁹

According to the law of recruitment, 25,000 men would be taken to the ranks every year.²⁶⁰ The eligible population was divided by lot; some were registered as *nizam*, and the remainder were classified as *redif*. *Redif* was to continue to participate in annual lots from the age of 20 to 25. The *nizam* soldier who completed military service was liable to be called to active duty in the reserve during the next seven years. Consequently, *redif* units in the Crimean War consisted of experienced soldiers along with inexperienced and partially trained men. Reserve troops may have been an excellent solution to form a low-cost army. However, the *redif* system, which required efficient management, was difficult to practice in an empire in which

²⁵⁸ Karal, vol. VI, p. 162; *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi 1793-1908*, vol. V, pp. 201-202; *Der Krieg gegen Russland*, p. 36; M. A Ubicini, *Letters sur la Turquie* (Paris, 1853), pp. 450-478.

²⁵⁹ For the military districts of these forces, see, Ubicini, pp. 453-454; Çadırçı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı*, p. 314; Heinzelmann, pp. 134-135, 275-279.

²⁶⁰ Fevzi, p. 8; According to another source 30,000 men would be summoned each year, and same number would be registered as reserve troops. *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi 1793-1908*, p. 203.

corruption and poor infrastructure hindered all efforts to summon reservists in wartime. Consequently, the *redif* troops acutely lacked training, equipments, and a sufficient number of officers; thus, they resembled local militia rather than regular forces.²⁶¹ Most of the observers referred to *redif* forces as militia, and the regular forces were simply referred to as the *nizam*.

A corps was composed of six infantry, four cavalry, and an artillery regiment along with a sapper company. An additional infantry regiment and a cavalry regiment were attached to the Guards and the Rumelian Army. However, the sixth army was in its infancy and was composed of only four infantry, two cavalry, and an artillery regiment. Each infantry regiment had 4 battalions (including a rifle battalion) of 8 companies and 815 men each.²⁶² A cavalry regiment was composed of 6 squadrons, each consisting of 120 men. Finally, an artillery regiment was composed of 4 battalions, totaling 72 guns and 1,300 men. Nevertheless, in reality, the battalions and squadrons rarely attained the envisaged numbers. Graf Osten-Sacken claimed that the Anatolian army never reached the planned number of 30,000 men and that the army contained only approximately 20,000 men.²⁶³

Serasker Pasha, who was theoretically commander-in-chief of all six armies collectively, acted as the Minister of War. He was also the commander of the *Dersaadet* corps.²⁶⁴ Each army (*ordu*) was commanded by a *Müşir* (field marshal), each division by a *ferik* (lieutenant-general), each brigade (*liva*) by a *mirliva* (brigadier-general), each regiment (*alay*) by a *miralay* (colonel), and each battalion

²⁶¹ See, Çadırcı, “Redif Askeri Teşkilatı”, in *Tanzimat Sürecinde Türkiye: Askerlik* (Ankara, 2008), pp. 41-55.

²⁶² Godfrey claimed that a battalion numbered from 800 to 900 men. Rhodes, p. 14.

²⁶³ RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 44, l. 2ob - 3.

²⁶⁴ *Salname 1270*, p. 91. In various sources, it is claimed that *Serasker* commanded the *Hassa*, but this statement is not true. Karal, vol. VI, p. 162; Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Döneminde Anadolu Kentleri'nin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı*, p. 314.

(*tabur*) by a *binbaşı* (major). To each army, an infantry and a cavalry lieutenant-general, three infantry, two cavalry, and an artillery brigadier-general were entrusted to command the troops. The Rumelian Army was commanded by Ömer Lütfi Pasha, first *müşir* and later *Serdar-i Ekrem* (generalissimo). Other high commanders of the Rumelian Army included Lieutenant-General Abdi Pasha, Lieutenant-General Avni Pasha, brigadier-generals of infantry Salih Pasha, Mustafa Tevfik Pasha and Sadık Pasha, brigadier-generals of cavalry Ali Rıza Pasha and Mustafa Pasha, brigadier-general of artillery İsmail Pasha, brigadier-general of *redif* Şükrü Pasha.²⁶⁵ Each army also possessed its own council of 7 members. The council of the Rumelian army was composed of Lieutenant-General Çerkes İsmail Pasha, who was the chief-of-staff (*reis-i meclis*). Brigadier-General Derviş Pasha, Colonel Hasan Bey, Colonel Selim Bey and Lieutenant-Colonel Dilaver Bey, Mehmed Efendi (a clerk), and Nazmi Efendi (an accountant) were the members of the council.²⁶⁶

Councils were established in every section of bureaucracy by *Tanzimat* reforms. Under *Serasker*, there was a high council of 15 members (*Dâr-i Şurâ-yı Askerî*). This high council administered all types of military affairs throughout the empire with the exception of artillery forces, which were under the supervision of the council of Imperial Artillery. Nevertheless, the role of the councils in military administration was often ambiguous. Sandwith claims, “In the councils of war which preceded the engagement each member made his own proposition, and finally went into action with no more definite plan of operations in his own mind than that they were ‘to fight the Ghiaours’”²⁶⁷.

²⁶⁵ *Salname* 1269, p. 85.

²⁶⁶ *Salname* 1269, p. 82.

²⁶⁷ Sandwith, pp. 121-122.

The reformation was conducted under the guidance of the European advisers. The Sublime Porte appeared to follow a balance in employing European experts. Whereas cavalry and infantry were entrusted to the French instructors to be reorganized according to the French system, artillery was modernized after the Prussian school.²⁶⁸ British officers and engineers were employed in the Ottoman factories and in the Ottoman navy. Moreover, hundreds of Hungarians and Polish refugees of the 1848 revolution found opportunities to serve in the Ottoman army during the Crimean War. Actually, with the understandable exception of the Russians, nearly every nationality in Europe served in various branches of the Ottoman armed forces in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Although the battalion was the basis of the Ottoman military establishment, divisions and brigades were no more than theoretical classifications.²⁶⁹ Sandwith rightly commented on the composition and command of the Ottoman forces: “It is extremely doubtful if any officer of the Turkish force understood the meaning of the word ‘brigade’, much less could they handle one.”²⁷⁰ In peacetime, battalions were entrusted with a distinct duty, and they were not relieved from that duty until their removal to another part of the country.²⁷¹ In wartime, battalions from different corps might be united as tactical units. Battalions, which were united for certain tactical reasons, would obviously cause confusion in the number and strength of the troops on the battlefield. This problem represented a significant set-back for the Ottomans in managing large forces.

²⁶⁸ Heuschling, p. 321.

²⁶⁹ [Hikmet Süer], p. 36.

²⁷⁰ Sandwith, p. 121.

²⁷¹ Rhodes, p. 91.

The *Nizam* forces used percussion-lock, the *redif* and irregulars possessed flintlock, the first and second squadrons of the cavalry used carbines, and the remainder had only lances.²⁷² New arms of the latest technology were ordered from Europe, but a small number of military personnel were lucky to own them. Those personnel were riflemen (*şışhaneci*), who were armed with French *minié* shortly before the war and were instructed by the French officers. Riflemen were conscripted generally from the mountainous people and were likely the best sections of the Ottoman infantry.²⁷³ A British observer stated, “The men are armed with rifles made at Vincennes, in France, which were received on the 1st August, 1853... General Jiffatte Pacha [Most probably Rıfat Paşa, the chief of staff of the Guards] informed us that from 60 to 70 men per hundred hit the target at 1000 yards.”²⁷⁴

The artillery was of two types: foot and horse. The Ottoman artillerymen were always exalted for the excellence of their gunnery.²⁷⁵ However, the Ottoman batteries all along the Ottoman Black Sea coast and in the capital were in terrible conditions: “From the Bosphorus to Batoom on the one hand, and from the Bosphorus to the Danube on the other, there was not on the coast of the Black Sea, when war commenced, a battery deserving of the name, nor a trained artilleryman, except at Varna”.²⁷⁶ The Ottomans would pay dearly when their fleet was destroyed in the Sinop Harbor, where the old batteries could not protect the battleships as well as the city itself. The Russians calculated that the batteries of the Bosphorus were not

²⁷² Gürel, p. 7.

²⁷³ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul [The Ottoman Archives of the Turkish Prime Ministry] [Hereafter BOA] İ.DH 17241, 17484, 17554. According to Sandwith these men had been recruited almost entirely from the *zeybeks*, mountaineers inhabiting the area south of Smyrna.

²⁷⁴ Rhodes, p. 13.

²⁷⁵ The artillery at Kars fortress was chiefly under the command of Tahir Pasha, who was one of the graduates of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. Sandwith, p. 271; Adnan Şişman, *Tanzimat Döneminde Fransa'ya Gönderilen Osmanlı Öğrencileri (1839 - 1876)* (Ankara 2004), p. 8.

²⁷⁶ Slade, p. 142.

sufficiently powerful to resist a Russian a *coup de main* upon the Ottoman capital. European observers shared the same opinion.

The modernization of the army did not prove successful for building a competent regular cavalry. The cavalry was mounted and equipped in the European fashion, but horses were small, ill-conditioned and poorly groomed. Even worse, the imitation of a European-type cavalry system played a role in the destruction of the light cavalry tradition.²⁷⁷ The army in the Caucasus depended primarily on tribal horsemen, who might be used for outpost duty but could not be trusted for charge. In fact, the regular cavalry proved no better than the *başbozuk*s in the Caucasus.²⁷⁸ Because there were only 6,000 regular cavalry to fight, the mounted police (*zaptiye*) in the Balkans and the Anatolia were called for active service in the Danubian army.²⁷⁹ According to Dodd, the Ottoman police were well mounted and armed.²⁸⁰ Most of the regular cavalry were also used on the Danube, along with the *zaptiyes* and the Cossack regiments.

Most importantly, the Ottoman army lacked a commissariat and a working chief of staff, which were necessary for any modern army at that time. The army was supposed to be modeled on the French system with a chief of staff, but the staff and its respective duties were dubious in the Ottoman corps. The staff officers, despite their insufficient numbers, were constantly assigned to commanding duties.

²⁷⁷ Sandwith, p. 230.

²⁷⁸ Sandwith, p. 105.

²⁷⁹ ATASE, k. 2, d. 6, f. 13; k. 2, d. 7, f. 12.

²⁸⁰ Dodd, p. 27.

4.3.1.1. Numbers of the Ottoman Troops

“It is impossible to give an accurate account of the number of men the Turks could bring into the field against the Russians”, claimed Colonel Moltke on the Ottoman army of the 1828-1829 Russian War.²⁸¹ After explaining the allocation of the Ottoman troops, Moltke added, “These calculations, however, are based chiefly on conjecture.”²⁸² His arguments are generally valid for each and every Russo-Ottoman encounter in the 19th century.

The *Nizam* battalion, the nucleus of the Ottoman army, was always thinner than planned. Peacetime troops simply evaporated because of malnutrition and diseases.²⁸³ Domestic disturbances, in which military forces were frequently employed, also brought about high death rates. During the Crimean War, unsurprisingly, there was a swift decrease in ranks because the Ottomans were not good at preserving their troops. In fact, the number of the Ottoman troops on paper did not always correspond to the real number. The planned numbers were much higher than the actual troops in the field. In some cases, actual numbers might have been deliberately distorted.

Despite the difficulty in determining the exact number, it was certainly the finest Ottoman army for decades. At the commencement of hostilities, the Ottomans were able to mobilize more than 200,000 men on two fronts; most of these men were trained regular soldiers. The best troops, as always, were dispatched to the Balkan passes and the Danube fortresses: the great portion of the Guards and the *Dersaadet*

²⁸¹ Moltke, p. 16.

²⁸² Moltke, p. 20.

²⁸³ In 1837, the number of soldiers was only 44 % of the total recruitment. Heinzelmann, p. 73.

armies would serve along with the Rumelian army in several defensive positions in Bulgaria in 1853 and 1854.

The army of *Tanzimat* was composed of six corps with their reserves. Each army was designed to have 25,000 men but could be increased to 50,000 men when reserves were summoned. Therefore, the Ottoman government contemplated an army of 300,000 regular troops who would be supported by irregulars and auxiliaries. However, by the Crimean War, the Porte was far from attaining this goal. Of the six armies, only three—the *Hassa*, the *Dersaadet*, and the *Rumeli*—completed their formations. An army of 50,000 men appeared to be an impossible goal even for these armies as a result of casualties and desertions.²⁸⁴ The reserve system was not entirely established by the commencement of the Crimean War. The Anatolian and Arabian armies did not possess reserve formations, and the Army of Iraq could not even finalize the establishment of regular regiments.

Count Osten-Sacken attempted to calculate the number of the Ottoman forces in 1851 and probably prepared what was likely to be one of the best accounts of the Ottoman army. According to the report, there were 8 companies, with approximately 800 men in an infantry battalion. However, the battalions were incomplete and were composed of only 432-576 men. Thus, there were 1,728-2,304 men in a regiment and 15,000-18,000 men in an army, including the artillery. Count Osten-Sacken argued that the regular infantry forces in 1851 were between 62,208 and 82,944 men. The cavalry regiments were also incomplete. There were 80-96 men in a squadron rather than 200, and there were only 480-576 men in a cavalry regiment which was far from

²⁸⁴ In state almanacs, it is claimed that all armies were complete with their eleven regiments, both regular and reserve. However, this claim is far from accurate. “... müstesna olan elviyeden maada kaffe-i memalik-i Osmaniyye altı orduya münkasım olunup her ordunun bir merkezle çend aded mevakii ve piyade ve sıvari ve topçu olarak on bir alay muvazzaf askeri ve kezalik on bir alay redifi vardır.” *Salname 1269*, p. 91.

the planned 1,200 men. As a consequence, the regular cavalry forces of the Empire should have been between 11,520 and 13,824 men in total.²⁸⁵ A total of 12,000 men were serving in artillery regiments. Thus, there were at most 108,768 regular Ottoman troops only two years before the war.

Count Osten Sacken's estimations		
Number of a regiment	Total in an army	Total forces
Infantry: 1,728-2,304 men	10,368 - 13,824 men (6 regiments)	62,208 - 82,944 men
Cavalry: 480-576 men	1920 - 2304 (4 regiments)	11,520 - 13,824
Artillery:		12,000 men
		85,728 – 108,768 men
Ubicini's estimations ²⁸⁶		
Number of a regiment	Total in an army	Total forces
Infantry: 2,800 men	16,800 men (6 regiments)	100,800
Cavalry: 720 men	2,880 (4 regiments)	17,280
Artillery: 1,300 men	1,300 men (1 regiment)	7,800
		125,880 men
Kolb's estimations		
		Total forces
		72,180
		22,737
		10,408
		105,325 men

Effective Ottoman armed forces (Six army corps)

	Number of Regiments	Planned numbers	Actual numbers
Infantry	36 regiments	117,360	100,800
Cavalry	24 regiments	22,416	17,280
Artillery	6 regiments	7,800	7,800
Fortress artillery	4 regiments	5,200	5,200
Engineers	2 regiments	1,600	1,600
Detached forces			
In Kandiye	4 regiments	8,000	8,000
In Trablus	2 regiments	4,000	4,000
In Tunisia	2 regiments	4,000	4,000
In total	80 regiments	170,376	148,680

Total Ottoman forces with the exception of the reserve units²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 45, l. 7

²⁸⁶ Ubicini, p. 453.

²⁸⁷ Ubicini, p. 455.

The quantity of Ottoman troops was also estimated in contemporary statistical books. Xavier Heuschling repeated the numbers provided by Uabicini but gives more specific accounts on the.²⁸⁸ Georg Friedrich Kolb, in his book on world statistics, argued that he acquired the numbers of the Ottoman army from the Ottoman Finance Minister. The numbers given by Kolb are similar to Count Osten-Sacken's information: *Nizam* infantry 72,180, cavalry and artillery 22,737, and Fortress Artillery and Reserve 10,408, for a total of 105,325. He also calculated the *Redif* as consisting of 92,650 infantrymen and 11,177 cavalrymen.²⁸⁹ Kolb's data appear to be reliable, although there could be some exaggerations regarding the *redif* troops. Abdolonyme Uabicini gave the most detailed numbers on the Ottoman Empire in terms of its economy, society, and army during the *Tanzimat* period. Uabicini also asserted that an Ottoman army was composed of 20,980 men. Interestingly, General Prim, the military commissioner of Spain to the Ottoman army, used the information on the Ottoman army provided by Uabicini.²⁹⁰

An Ottoman document written during the preparations for the war gave the number of regular forces that were intended to be summoned at Şumnu, Varna and the Danubian coast as 8,000 artillerymen, 63,934 infantrymen (*redif* and *nizam*) and 10,240 cavalrymen, totaling 82,174 regular forces. According to this document, there would be 50,200 men in Istanbul and 26,190 on the Anatolian front, with the regular forces totaling 158,564 men.²⁹¹ According to another Ottoman document, there were 53 infantry battalions in the summer of 1853 in the Balkans. That number would amount to 30,000 - 40,000 regular infantrymen.

²⁸⁸ Xavier Heuschling, *L'Empire la Turquie* (1860), pp. 321-334.

²⁸⁹ B. Kolb, *Handbuch der vergleichenden Statistik. Der Völkerzustands und Staatenkunde* (Zürich, 1857), p. 296.

²⁹⁰ Uabicini, pp. 453- 460; Prim, pp. 70- 82.

²⁹¹ ATASE, k. 2, d. 6, f. 17, no date.

According to Gürel, the force entrusted to the Balkan front totaled 105,000 infantrymen, twelve regiments of cavalry (including two Cossack regiments) amounting to 8,700 men, 4,300 artillerymen with 40 batteries, 10,000 mounted police and 12,000 irregular cavalry.²⁹² Captain Fevzi (Kurtoğlu) provided a higher number—178,000 men, including 12,000 *başibozuks*. The claim of 105,000 infantrymen by Gürel likely also included the auxiliary forces from Egypt and Albania, which consisted of approximately 25,000 men. According to the official history of the Turkish General Staff, the regular troops intended to be summoned were 138,680 *muazzaf* and 138,680 *redif*, which would be supported by 110,000 auxiliaries and 61,500 *başibozuks*.²⁹³

The army of the Ottomans in the Balkans against Russia's South Army was thus composed of regiments coming from the Rumelian, the Dersaadet, and the Hassa armies, both *nizam* and *redif*, supported by the auxiliaries, irregulars, and mounted police.²⁹⁴ Because the Ottomans did not have a solid and clear military establishment, it is not possible to know the exact number, but the Ottoman forces in the Balkans numbered approximately 140,000 men in total.²⁹⁵ It can be claimed that there were approximately 100,000 *nizam* and 50,000 *redif* troops at the beginning of the war. *Zaptiye* forces, the Egyptian and the Albanian auxiliaries, and the *başibozuks* from various regions of the Empire increased the number to more than 200,000 men. The best army units were reserved for the Balkans. Nevertheless, wartime changes in troop numbers make it more difficult to speculate on quantities.

²⁹² Gürel, pp. 8-11.

²⁹³ *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi*, p. 205.

²⁹⁴ See, for example, a letter sent by Ömer Pasha on the assembling of different regiments from different armies during the preparations for war, ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 14, 27 Şevval 1269 [3 August 1853]. In this document, two battalions of the fifth regiment of the Reserve army of the Guards were sent to Rahova and Niğbolu, fourth battalion of the second regiment and second battalion of the third regiment of the reserve army of Constantinople arrived at Şumnu.

²⁹⁵ Kovalevskii also gave a fair number: 133,000 men, 10,000 of which were Egyptian forces. Kovalevskii, p. 72.

Notwithstanding the new conscripts, the weakening of the battalions as a result of casualties was the reality of the war. In Gözleve, for instance, the Ottoman battalions in 1856 composed only 30-40 men rather than a thousand.

Auxiliaries were important for the war effort, but none of the autonomous states actually assisted the central government in practice. For instance, military aid from the Principalities and Serbia against a Russian army was unrealistic. However, Egypt and Tunis, conveyed valuable support to the Porte. Abbas Halim Pasha, the Viceroy of Egypt, stated in his letter that land forces would comprise six regiments and would exceed 14,000 men.²⁹⁶ In the summer of 1853, there were approximately 15,000 Egyptian troops in Hünkar İskelesi under the command of Selim Pasha.²⁹⁷ Egyptian forces, composed of “old warriors”, would initially serve as part of the Danubian Army before Silistre and in Dobruja and would subsequently be sent to the Crimea. Egyptian fleet also sailed along with the Ottoman sea power in the Black Sea. The total Egyptian forces fought in the Crimean War were well beyond 20,000 men.²⁹⁸

In addition to the above-mentioned corps, there were some artillery and engineer units attached to the Imperial Arsenal (*Tophane-i Hümâyûn*) and four regiments stationed in the fortresses of Dardanelles and Bosphorus. Moreover, detached forces were stationed at Crete (8,000 men), Tripoli (4,000 men), and Tunis (4,000 men). In addition to the land forces, there was also a thin fleet (*ince donanma*) on the Danube. The Ottoman thin fleet was consisted of 2 steamers, 8 gunboats, 188

²⁹⁶ ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 23, 7 Şevval 1269 [14 July 1853]. After the declaration of war, the Porte asked for additional forces of three infantry regiments and some artillerymen with 50,000 muskets, but it is unclear whether they were sent. ATASE, k. 3, d. 9, f. 35/1.

²⁹⁷ Rhodes, p. 21.

²⁹⁸ *Kırım Harbi Kafkas Cephesi*, p. 33.

canoe (*chaika*) and 85 boats (*kirlash*). Most of these boats were in Maçin, Rusçuk and Vidin.²⁹⁹

Overall, it can be concluded that the most detailed and reliable numbers were given by Ubicini. The change in the number of Ottoman forces during the war cannot be understood and explained without detailed research on the checklists of the Ottoman troops.

4.3.1.2. The Commander-in-Chief

Insurrections throughout the empire following *Tanzimat* reforms asked for prompt intervention by the new army. In fact, the campaigns against domestic disturbances were the only achievements of the *nizam* army before the Crimean War. The author of these victories was Ömer Lütfi Pasha, who successfully commanded campaigns in Syria against Druzes, in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1851 and in Montenegro in 1852. He also commanded the Ottoman troops in Wallachia during the 1848 revolution. Thus, as the field-commander of the *Tanzimat* reforms, Ömer Lütfi Pasha crushed all domestic opposition by showing no hesitance in brutality. Having never failed in his missions, Ömer Lütfi Pasha was therefore the best choice, if not the only choice, to command the Ottoman army on the Danube during the Crimean War.

Ömer Lütfi Pasha was originally Mihaylo Lattas, an Austrian subject who was born in Ogulina in Croatia in 1806. As a frontier guard, Lattas was promoted to an ensign. However, in 1828, he ran away to Bosnia for unclear reasons. Soon

²⁹⁹ Kovalevskii, p. 75; Petrov, vol. I, p. 125.

afterward, in the Ottoman Empire, he was promoted the adjutant of Polish General Hrzanowski.³⁰⁰ His reputation increased after the suppression of each uprising, and before the Crimean War, his popularity was at the peak. Count Osten-Sacken, the Russian military attaché in Istanbul, reported to the Russian capital in 1852 that the Ottoman government was confident only in Ömer Lütfi Pasha's military capabilities in a war against Russia. The British Foreign Minister Lord Clarendon's comment on Ömer Lütfi Pasha was more striking. Although Ömer Lütfi Pasha's fame was in decline because of the arrival of the British and French commanders (i.e., the Duke of Cambridge, Prince Napoleon, Lord Raglan) on the field, Clarendon claimed that "I believe that Omer Pacha is the only real General out there and that The Emperor [Napoleon III] when he gets to the Crimea would find more practical support and get better advice from him than from Raglan or Canrobert". Cowley, the British ambassador to Paris, agreed with the foreign minister: "I think Omer Pacha [is] the best General in the Crimea."³⁰¹

General Prim, a Spanish observer of the war, also had a high opinion of the talents of Ömer Lütfi Pasha.³⁰² In the Russian sources, however, Ömer Lütfi Pasha was portrayed as a cruel and strict commander rather than a skilled commander. For example, Kovalevskii argued that Ömer Lütfi Pasha, who lacked sufficient military education, never demonstrated his talent of command in a serious battle but simply made good use of the circumstances.³⁰³ Ömer Lütfi Pasha was also negatively portrayed by the French Colonel Magnan. According to Magnan, "Omar Pacha was the most arrogant and unfit man to command an army that he had ever met with. That

³⁰⁰ Kovalevskii, pp. 70-71; Petrov, vol. I, pp. 123-124.

³⁰¹ *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. III, p. 597.

³⁰² Prim, pp. 181-183

³⁰³ Kovalevskii, pp. 71-72.

he looked upon himself as called upon to be the regenerator and Saviour of Turkey, and that his self confidence knew no bounds.”³⁰⁴

Nevertheless, as a result of his charisma, Ömer Lütfi Pasha had no rival and enjoyed absolute control over his army. He was even promoted to *Serdar-i Ekrem* (commander-in-chief of all Ottoman corps) in 1854 in view of his successes at the front. However, Ömer Lütfi Pasha likely had little confidence in the Ottoman government. His relations with several prominent figures were less than friendly, especially his relations with *Serasker* Hasan Rıza Pasha. Their disagreements became evident following Ömer Lütfi Pasha’s promotion to *Serdar-i Ekrem* after the battle of Çatana. According to Mehmed Sadık Pasha (Michał Czajkowski), when the commanders of the Allied forces convened in Varna in June 1854, the officers of the Ottoman army were divided into two factions: supporters of Ömer Lütfi Pasha and supporters of Hasan Rıza Pasha.³⁰⁵ Therefore, Ömer Lütfi Pasha must have felt the need to be cautious in all of his actions, both in military and in political terms. Captain Giovanni Govone, the Sardinian military commissioner of the Ottoman army, claimed that when Mehmed Ali Pasha was dismissed from the office of *Seraskerlik* at the beginning of 1854, he refused to submit the plans of Kalafat to his successor, Hasan Rıza Pasha.³⁰⁶ It is impossible to understand the validity of this argument, but it is true that there were disagreements and frictions in the Ottoman governing circle, and among the Ottoman army commanders. In the Russo-Ottoman wars, one of the main problems of the Ottomans was the discord and envy among the commanders. The name of Ömer Pasha was thus important because of the scarcity of talented commanders who enjoyed some authority in the Ottoman army. Without

³⁰⁴ Cowley to Clarendon, Paris, 11 November 1853, *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. I, pp. 629.

³⁰⁵ “Zapiski Mikhaila Chaikovskogo”, *Russkaya starina*, 1898, no. 10, pp. 197-198

³⁰⁶ Govone, *Memoires*, p. 43.

such a leader, the command in the Caucasus was relentlessly chaotic, and the Ottomans thus failed in nearly every encounter with the Russians.

4.3.1.3. The Officer

Andrew Archibald Paton, a British traveler who visited the Turkish strongholds along the Danube and the headquarters at Şumnu in autumn 1853, offered the following observation: “The Turkish army has excellent extremes: in Omar-Pasha a skilful captain, as well as a few men of merit to second him, and troops instinctively brave and enduring; but between these two, an ugly vacuum of professional ineptitude and corruption.”³⁰⁷ Captain Govone supported Paton: “These poor Turks have only Omer-Pacha and brave soldiers.”³⁰⁸ The Ottoman officers were rarely praised. Paton quoted a Russian officer who had been a prisoner in Istanbul: “the Sultan ought to give all the privates the decoration of the Nishan, and all the officers the bastinado”.³⁰⁹ Slade shared the same opinion: “Throughout the war, whether ashore or afloat, the men, with nothing to gain, displayed more zeal than the officers, with honours and promotion in view”.³¹⁰ For many observers, the Ottoman officers abused their offices at the expense of the lives of their soldiers. The officers were portrayed as inadequate and insufficient in their profession and as corrupt and selfish in their every act and decision.

The officer corps was the most heterogeneous part of the Ottoman army. Muslim—and predominantly Turkish—peasants were typically conscripted to

³⁰⁷ Paton, p. 46.

³⁰⁸ Govone, p. 46.

³⁰⁹ Quoted in Paton, p.39.

³¹⁰ Slade, p. 132.

become privates. A ranker, an Ottoman student who graduated from a military college in Europe, or a European adventurer could be enlisted as a member of the officer corps. Such an eclectic body would bring about several problems in defining and implementing battle plans and tactics. Some of these officers were newcomers not only in the Ottoman army but also in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, it was unlikely that they would be able to command the army and communicate with the Ottoman soldiers. Most importantly, the officers, who had diverse world views and military aims, did not like one another. Consequently, *ad hoc* assignments of the commanders would be one of the reasons for the failure on the Caucasian front.

During the reign of Mahmud II, students were sent to Europe to obtain a modern education that was deemed essential for commanding newly established army corps. Military schools (*İdadî*) were established in Bursa, Edirne, and Manastır. Military High School (*Mekteb-i Harbiyye-i Şâhâne*) was established in Istanbul, first in Maçka and then in Pangaltı. Military High School graduated its first students in 1848. Although new European-style military schools improved the quality of commanders, they were not immune to Eastern practices. The students were the relatives of the notable Ottoman officials. These favored youths had the shortest road to career aggrandizement and thus had hardly any motive for learning and advancing their skills.³¹¹ Some of these graduates were assigned as teachers at Military High School, and at a young age, they taught alongside the European instructors.³¹² One lieutenant-general, two major-generals, and one colonel who were under twenty years of age were among the scholars in the military school at Istanbul in 1853. Mazhar Pasha, one of the young major-generals, would leave the school in 1854 to

³¹¹ Slade, p. 57.

³¹² *Osmanlı Teşkilat ve Kiyafet-i Askeriyyesi*, vol. II, p. 16.

command a cavalry brigade in Bulgaria.³¹³ The military schools were not optimal for preparing necessary officers on short notice.

Mustafa Zarif, subsequently the commander of the Anatolian Army, became a *ferik* in 1845 at the age of 29 without any commanding experience. The assignment of the nephew of Ömer Lütfi Pasha was no different. Likely lacking military experience, he would be accepted into the Ottoman service as Major Ömer Bey.³¹⁴ Nevertheless, during the preparations for war, Ömer Lütfi Pasha openly praised the graduates of the *Tanzimat* schools. He claimed that he was unaware of the knowledge and skills of the staff officers. According to the Ottoman commander, the education of officers in such a short period was a real accomplishment.³¹⁵ It is impossible to understand whether he was sincere in this claim or whether he was simply giving compliments.

Because the modernization of the Ottoman army was an incomplete project, capable officers were unfortunately insufficient in number. There were only a few military schools to fill the absent cadres; thus, most of the officers continued to obtain their commanding positions after service in the ranks (*alaylı*).³¹⁶ This two-footed structure of the Ottoman army would continue to the very end of the empire, and it caused contentions and factions from the top of the command to the ordinary officers. Accordingly, the dichotomy of *mektepli* and *alaylı*, was also visible throughout the Crimean War. Most of the *alaylı* officers were old, brave and experienced men of war and did not like the new officers, who had not participated in any previous battle but commanded a foreign language and the science of war to

³¹³ Slade wrote the name incorrectly as Mahzar. Slade, p. 57, footnote; BOA HR MKT 86-66.

³¹⁴ Rhodes, p. 117.

³¹⁵ ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 3/1, 27 Ramazan 1269 [4 July 1853].

³¹⁶ Fevzi, p. 7.

some extent. The newly educated Ottoman military elite in turn regarded the rankers, most of whom were illiterate, as inferior. Alyanak (the “Red Cheek”) Mustafa Pasha was a man of higher education, a learned man, and he belonged to one of the prominent families in the Ottoman Empire through marriage. He was a Circassian, an honest and honorable man, but he had no commanding experience before the war, just as his staff was composed of the finest students of military schools of Istanbul. His staff members learned from books and papers but were ignorant of military life and the practice of war.³¹⁷

On the battlefield, there was on the one hand, Kel (the “Bald”) Hasan Hakkı Pasha—an old veteran of the previous Russo-Turkish wars.³¹⁸ Other prominent rankers included Çerkes İsmail Pasha and Mustafa Tevfik Pasha, who played significant roles on the Danube during the Crimean War.³¹⁹ Both rankers had less than friendly relations with the educated commanders. At Kalafat, relations between Nazır Ahmed Pasha and Çerkes İsmail Pasha were troublesome. İsmail Pasha was the commander of the forces in both Vidin and Sofia.³²⁰ Czajkowski was also critical of the *mektebli* officers because of their lack of military experience and courage on the battlefield.

Paton, the British correspondent, described İsmail Pasha as follows: “He appears forty-five years of age, with sunburnt face and a slight cast of one eye...

³¹⁷ Czajkowski, *Moje wspomnienia o wojnie 1854 roku*, p. 35. In August, Ferik Alyanak Mustafa Pasha was promoted to the rank of *müsir* and was sent to Batum as the commander of the Batum army, despite his failure to stop the Russians in Dobruja. Badem, p.185

³¹⁸ He was from Tokat. He was one of the first commanders of the regular army. He was quickly promoted to a vizier, but he was subsequently demoted. During the Crimean War, his titles were returned to him, and he was sent to the Danube to command some of the Ottoman troops.

³¹⁹ İsmail Pasha was a slave of a certain Ottoman Pasha; subsequently, he entered the army and was rapidly promoted. He was one of the skillful pashas coming from the ranks. “Ismail-Pacha is the only officer whom Turkish pride can really compare for his military talents with the most distinguished Generals of Europe.” *The Eclaireur, a military journal*, vol. II, New York, 1855, p 134. Mustafa Tevfik Pasha was a member of Menemenli tribe from Adana.

³²⁰ For the defense preparations at Vidin and surrounding towns under the command of İsmail Pasha, see, ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 15, 5 Şevval 1269 [12 July 1853].

Without having the large strategical views or European attainments of Omer-Pasha, he has much natural ability, being not only a man of daring bravery but very clever in stratagem within a certain range...”³²¹ Ahmed Pasha, the director of the military school in Istanbul and the commander of the Ottoman forces at Kalafat, earned his education in Vienna. Ahmed Pasha was, in Paton’s words, “a regularly bred military engineer had attended during seven years the classes in Vienna at which his craft are taught, and consequently spoke German fluently and correctly; in person he is tall and portly, approaching to corpulency with a Roman nose and regular features.” Czajkowski called him Bülbül or Duda Ahmed Pasha.³²² Mehmed Rifat Pasha, the commander of the troops in Silistre after the death of Musa Hulusî Pasha, graduated from the famous military academy Saint-Cyr in Paris. In this rivalry, Ömer Lütfi Pasha openly supported the *mektepli* officers.³²³

Nevertheless, the most pressing problem in the command was the lack of a system of assignment and promotion. Both *alaylı* and *mektepli*, who secured patronage in the Ottoman capital, could easily rise to the highest ranks of the army, but not necessarily in relation to their capacity for commanding. Godkin portrayed Mirliva Abdulhalim Pasha, who commanded troops on the Danube, as follows: “Halim Pasha is a coarse, uneducated man, who has risen from the lowest grade to his present position, like many other Pachas. God knows how.”³²⁴ Sandwith portrayed Vasif Pasha, the Müşir of the Anatolian army after Mustafa Zarif Pasha, as follows: “I believe he had never heard a gun fired in earnest; he scarcely knew how to read or write: his accomplishments were limited to smoking a narguileh and gracefully receiving visitors; nevertheless, he was a good man, and one of the best

³²¹ Paton, pp. 38-39.

³²² Czajkowski, *Moje wspomnienia o wojnie 1854 roku*, pp. 36, 42.

³²³ Czajkowski, *Moje wspomnienia o wojnie 1854 roku*, p. 36.

³²⁴ *Life and Letters of Edwin Lawrence Godkin*, Rollo Ogden (ed.), vol. I (New York, 1907), p. 58.

Turkish pashas I ever met with.”³²⁵ His description regarding *Müşir* Ahmed Pasha, commander of the Caucasian army, was no better: “His whole faculties were bent upon making money. He had in the first place to recover the sums he had already expended in bribes at Constantinople, and he had, besides, to make his fortune.”³²⁶ Butler shared the common view of Ottoman officers and recruits: “The men are certainly first rate, but the officers wretched, not one of them able to do a thing, and thinking of nothing but their own safety.”³²⁷

Some of these imported officers embraced Islam, but many others retained their religion and names and worked as hired personnel for short or long periods. Ömer Lütfi Pasha was the most famous example of the former, and Adolphus Slade (Müşavir Pasha) was an example of the latter. General Williams at Kars was the first officer who was admitted to the Sultan’s service with his infidel name, and he was called Williams Pasha.³²⁸

Indeed, the posts given to the European officers and the Hungarian and Polish refugees were viewed as a practical solution to this chronic officer shortage. During the war, the command positions in the Ottoman army continued to be filled with European officers. A correspondent of *The Times* reported from Varna on 20 January 1854, “A Wallachian General, two or three American officers, and several French and Swedish officers, have arrived at head-quarters to take service in the Ottoman army.”³²⁹ Several Americans have been connected with the Ottoman army at different times. Major Bonafanti was on active duty at Kars. Major Burr Porter was

³²⁵ Sandwith, p. 215.

³²⁶ Sandwith, p. 94.

³²⁷ Woods, p. 125.

³²⁸ Sandwith, p. 208.

³²⁹ “Latest Intelligence”, *The Times*, 9 February 1854.

also serving in the Ottoman army.³³⁰ The cadres given to the European officers were not well planned. Thus, several European officers who commanded the troops of the Anatolian army would not bring success in battle. Sandwith drew a gloomy picture of European officers at the Kars fortress: “All these exiles united in abusing the Turks, for whom they were fighting, and denouncing the opposing clique of Magyar, Italian, or any nationality of which it was composed... They were the type of what are termed adventurers, yet were there some noble exceptions to this description.”³³¹ He further made the following claims: “I recognized many who were formerly loungers about the door of the Pera theatre”; “Such men as chiboukjis, barbers, and the like, were sent as Commander-in-Chief to plunder and ruin an army”; and “A certain Perote money-lender, whose profession gives him great influence in the capital, is said to have obtained the rank of Colonel for a Polish sugar-refiner and horse-dealer, who had been a sergeant in the revolutionary war.” Such figures were among the ranks of the Ottoman army on the strategic front and at a crucial time. On the Caucasus front, officers were divided into factions.³³² According to Sandwith, anything that was good or that was praised in the Ottoman territory was an achievement of the British commander (Guyon or Williams) or consul (Brant). Strong debates and disagreements between several Polish factions in Istanbul occurred. “Numbers of European officers were there in the Turkish service, and according to all accounts their behavior was by no means calculated to encourage these gallant Mussulmans. Their courage generally was unquestioned, but they were split up into little parties at deadly feud with each other. The Poles were perhaps the most numerous of these foreigners, and they were accused of courting Turkish favour to the detriment of the army by encouraging the Mushir to neglect the advice of

³³⁰ Richard C. McCormick, *Visit to the Camp Before Sevastopol* (New York, 1855), p. 211.

³³¹ Sandwith, p. 85.

³³² Sandwith, p. 122.

General Guyon and others. Some were being accused of Russian spies... Some of these foreign officers undoubtedly occupied places for which they were altogether unfit.³³³ The correspondent of *The Times* was absolutely right in the following claim: "In a military point of view we know no more of Turkey than we do of the moon. Not a single English military officer is or has been recently employed officially in Turkey. A few may have gone as tourists, having gleaned as much information as is usual on such trips – such as the price of eggs, &c; but accurate military information, and a knowledge of this very difficult language, would, I fear, be looked for in vain."³³⁴

Although Ömer Lütfi Pasha had no proper chief of staff, he had a crowded entourage that included several European officers. At very commencement of hostilities, Sardinia and Spain sent their commissions to observe the war. The visit of Spanish General Don Juan Prim was brief, but the Sardinian Captain Giuseppe Govone remained long with Ömer Lütfi Pasha. The British and French armies also had their commissions in the Ottoman headquarters, i.e., Colonel Charles-Prosper Dieu and Lieutenant-Colonel John Lintorn Arabin Simmons.³³⁵

	Commander	Chief of Staff
Hassa Corps	Selim Pasha, Mehmed Rüştü Pasha	Rıfat Pasha
Dersaadet Corps	Serasker	Eyüb Sabri Pasha
Rumeli Corps	Ömer Lütfi Pasha	Çerkes İsmail Pasha
Anadolu Corps	Abdükerim Nadir Pasha (Later, Ahmed Pasha, İsmail Pasha, Mustafa Zarif Pasha, Mehmed Vasif Pasha)	Ahmed Pasha (Later Abdükerim Pasha)
Arabistan Corps	Mehmed Vasif Pasha	Davud Pasha (Later, in August)

³³³ Sandwith, pp. 114-115.

³³⁴ "Turkey, Constantinople, 25 January (From our own Correspondent)", *The Times*, 9 February 1854.

³³⁵ [Anthony Coningham Sterling], *Letters from the Army in the Crimea written during the years 1854, 1855, and 1856* (London, 1857), p. 43.

Iraq and Hejaz Corps	Mehmed Reşid Pasha	1853 İzzet Pasha)
	Selim Pasha	

The top commanders of the Ottoman army on the eve of the Crimean War

Most of the troops of the *Hassa* and *Dersaadet* armies were sent to the Danubian front. When Ömer Lütfi Pasha was promoted to *Serdar-i Ekrem*, İsmail Pasha would become the Müşir of Anadolu Corps. However, the army was the most unstable with respect to its command. Ahmed Pasha, İsmail Pasha, Mustafa Zarifî Pasha, and Mehmed Vasîf Pasha were assigned to the command of the Anatolian army during the Crimean War. Some of the commanders were tried for corruption.

4.3.1.4. The Recruit

The French and English officers did not form a high opinion of anything but the recruits of the Ottoman army. According to Govone, “The soldier of the regular army is excellent, sober, courageous, and solid, but essentially passive which decreases the value of the Turkish army in Europe.”³³⁶ The Ottoman soldier was regarded as “a raw material which, like everything else in Turkey, had been spoilt as much as possible by the genius of maladministration”.³³⁷ When better command and supplies were provided, they could be among the best troops in Europe.³³⁸ The patience and subordination of the Ottoman soldiers were sources of admiration: “they had been ill-treated and abandoned by their officers, plundered of their dues, wretchedly clothed and armed, and were many of them twenty-four months in arrears

³³⁶ Govone *mémoires*, p. 34.

³³⁷ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 102.

³³⁸ Sandwith, p. 132.

of pay; and yet the desertions were by no means so numerous as might have been anticipated. Their patience and long suffering, their sobriety and subordination, were beyond all praise.”³³⁹ Colonel Chesney argued that there were three merits of the Ottoman soldier: “implicit obedience, enthusiasm in the cause of their Sultan, and abstinence from the use of fermented liquors.”³⁴⁰ The recruits in the army suffered from numerous privations and from the inhumane conduct of their officers: “This mean and spiteful conduct towards these unfortunate young Turks was observable in all their superior officers, from the *Mushir* downwards, and was shown in a variety of ways. No tents, pay, or rations were given them, and they prowled about the camp in rags, fed by the charity of those who pitied their sad condition.”³⁴¹ The high opinion of the Ottoman soldiers from foreign observers would, however, diminish after their alleged cowardice in the battle of Balaklava.

The *Tanzimat* did not increase the pool of recruits or lighten the burden of the Muslim population. Service in the regular armed forces continued to be reserved for Muslims. Because the depots for the Ottoman soldier were the lands of Rumelia and Anatolia and the ethnically Turkish element was believed to be much more reliable than other Muslim subjects of the Empire, the Ottoman regular army was predominantly composed of Turkish element. The process of recruitment was not always in line with the regulations. “The greater part of the army was composed of men seized in their villages, in violation of the usual rules of conscription, and the depressed moral state of middle-aged men, torn from their families, was but little calculated to carry them gaily through much suffering,” Sandwith continued, “These Rediff, as they are termed, were not raised according to law, but were luckless

³³⁹ Sandwith, p. 132.

³⁴⁰ Chesney, p.

³⁴¹ Sandwith, p. 122.

peasants seized haphazard, who consequently were always watching for an opportunity to desert.”³⁴² Kadir Bey, who fled to the Russians from the Ottoman camp in Kalafat, was an interesting example of the Ottoman recruitment. In his interrogation, Kadir Bey claimed that he was from Shamakhi, a town in southern Caucasus under Russian rule. He was in Istanbul only for business but was forcibly registered for the regular cavalry.³⁴³

In many cases, the assembling of *redif* caused disturbances. In Upper Debre (Debre-i Bâlâ), for instance, after the visit of the Ottoman officers to collect the reserves, the people who did not want to contribute more soldiers fought with Governor Numan Sabit, who was forced to leave town. The women of Debre were straightforward in their claim: “You wretch, you have left us and our households alone”.³⁴⁴ Obviously, the Muslim population once more suffered heavily from the war.

4.3.1.5. The Irregulars (*Başbozuks*)

Raising *Başbozuks*, badly reputed irregulars of the Ottoman army, “was not only a useful measure, but a time-honoured Ottoman custom.”³⁴⁵ They were supposed to act as the vanguard of the regular army, to protect convoys, to harass the enemy by cutting off supplies and collecting information and, in short, by performing various essential duties that were destructive to regular cavalry.

³⁴² Sandwith, pp. 94, 96.

³⁴³ His name reads as Kadir Bek in the original document. RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5459, l. 348-349.

³⁴⁴ Translation of the letter from Numan Sabit Bey to Abdi Pasha into English, 20 January 1854, TNA, FO 352-40-2.

³⁴⁵ Sandwith, p. 154.

During the Crimean War, thousands of irregulars from various provinces of the Empire were summoned. More than 10,000 men were considered to be received in the Ottoman capital from Anatolia and Syria shortly after the declaration of war. These volunteers, who were granted a new horse in case of loss, would also have rations and pay.³⁴⁶ Albanians from the Gega and the Toska would assist the war effort with 12,000 men.³⁴⁷ An enormous force of approximately 50,000 men was mobilized in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would be charged in the region to be employed in case of an uprising in the Balkans.³⁴⁸ In fact, the Bosnians, who were harshly suppressed by Ömer Pasha in 1851, were unwilling to be a part of the regular army. Therefore, the Ottomans could not efficiently use the Bosnian cavalrymen during the Crimean War.

It was not always possible to determine the number of irregular troops and their actual strength. Hasan Yazıcı, a *sergerde* on the Caucasian front, claimed that he had 2,000 men. However, there were only 800 troops, most of whom were youngsters. Such fraud was frequent, as *sergerdes* could earn a great deal of money by exaggerating the number of soldiers under their command.³⁴⁹

Although the regular forces were predominantly Turkish, the Ottoman army was ethnically far from homogenous because of the irregulars and auxiliaries. A contemporary Russian military expert, analyzing the nature of the Russo-Ottoman wars before the Crimean War concluded that the Ottoman army was second only to Austria with its heterogeneous character. The author enumerated Albanians of two

³⁴⁶ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 13 [Draft]. Actually, it is unclear whether this generosity was the case for all irregulars. According to Süer, irregulars were receiving some pay, rations and even ammunition for their training during peace-time. [Hikmet Süer], p. 36.

³⁴⁷ ATASE, k. 2, d. 6, f. 15/1.

³⁴⁸ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 8.

³⁴⁹ Badem, p. 168.

religions, Bosnians professing three different beliefs, Macedonians, Rumelians, Thessalians, Bulgarians, Dobruja Tatars, inhabitants of Deli Orman, Nekrasov and Zaporog Cossacks, various peoples of Anatolia and Egypt.³⁵⁰ Paton described their heterogeneity well: “Along the high street or line of bazaars I saw the shops and cafes filled with a fanatical and enthusiastic soldiery, the irregulars in their magnificent old Turkish costume, the tall broad shouldered fair complexioned Bosniak from his land of hills and heroes, the vivacious but somewhat cut-throat-looking Albanian, glib in speech, and armed with four pistols often too ready to suit the action to the word, the dull, heavy, slow moving Anatolian Turk, talking loud and deep, all fellows who know very little of manual and platoon exercise, but who will work a gun or stand in a trench without flinching; such tough material as the defenders of Arab-Tabia were made of.”³⁵¹

Their independent nature was always emphasized. “The strangest figures swarm in from the distant provinces to have a cut at the Muscovite. Turbans, lances, maces and battle-axes jostle each other in the narrow streets [of Istanbul].”³⁵² Rhodes, a British officer, described the irregulars in Çorlu on their way to Şumnu from Syria: “all armed-chiefly with a short single-barreled gun, two long pistols, and a long, straight, broad poignard or sword. Several of them had lances – the stock or shaft being made of bamboo. These men had a chief and a drummer, - the latter preceding the former, and beating his two little drums at the same time, and singing, with great energy.”³⁵³

³⁵⁰ I. P. Liprandi, *Osobennosti voin s Turkami* (St. Petersburg, 1877), p. 22.

³⁵¹ Paton, pp. 27-28; see also Dodd, pp. 31-32.

³⁵² Quoted in Temperley, pp. 350-351.

³⁵³ Rhodes, p. 36.

The Ottoman irregulars were not always positively caricaturized in Western literature.³⁵⁴ Their unruly deeds, cruelties, and, most importantly, their ineffectiveness on the battlefield were also mentioned. The Russian sources portrayed the Ottoman *başbozuk*s as disobedient and cruel forces who were only busy oppressing the local Christian population rather than fighting against the enemy. Petrov, the Russian military historian, claimed that “[they] did not have any military training and most of them engaged only in plunder.”³⁵⁵ According to Petrov, 12,000 Ottoman troops in Silistre were largely composed of *başbozuk*s who simply plundered the neighboring villages.³⁵⁶

The privileges of the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire were the controversy that paved the path to war. Thus, it should be considered a just war not only in the eyes of the Muslim population but also from the perspective of the Christian subjects. Moreover, the protection of the Ottoman Christians was critical to sustain the prestige of the Ottoman government. The possible atrocities of the irregulars against the Christian population were imminent threats to the Ottoman prestige, which could have led to the cause the loss of Western popular and political support. Therefore, the Porte was careful to promote Western public opinion. Although the Porte could not always succeed in controlling the irregulars, it prominently displayed its effort. In reality, the Ottoman government was careful in its employment. The effort to control the irregulars was especially evident during their transfer to the war theatre when they could encounter unprotected civilians.³⁵⁷ Irregulars would most likely breed trouble during their transportation to the front and

³⁵⁴ It was more so during the 1877-78 war between the Ottoman and Russian Empires when their atrocities, although highly exaggerated, were widely written and discussed in Western media. However, in reality, the Western public opinion and political stance were not so negative during the Crimean War with respect to the Ottoman irregulars.

³⁵⁵ Petrov, vol. I, p. 124.

³⁵⁶ Petrov, vol. I, p. 139.

³⁵⁷ ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 1, 1 Ramazan 1269.

would come at a high cost on the front. Because of their harmful traits, the Porte was reluctant to deploy the irregulars unless absolutely necessary. The commanders were asked to inform the Porte about the need for assistance from volunteers. Although the idea of jihad on which Ottoman warfare was based made the discharge of irregulars difficult, they would be sent back if they were perceived as useless. Their subordination and devotion to their tribal leader or *sergerde* represented another shortcoming of the employment of irregulars.

The main task of the irregulars was to monitor the enemy and to enter skirmishes when necessary. Because they were the vanguard forces, they acted independently from the main body of the army, which gave them the opportunity to pillage villages behind the front. One of the reasons for the atrocities of the *başibozuks* was their perception of the *reaya*, or the Ottoman Christians.

During the Crimean War, the *başibozuks* in the Danubian theatre were more successful than those in the Caucasus. Their usefulness likely correlated with the success of the regular army. In particular, the *başibozuks* were used for reconnaissance activities or served as a patrolling force.³⁵⁸ In the famous redoubt “Arab Tabia” and during the reconnaissance activities in front of the redoubts, the *başibozuks* played their role well. In reality, the fighting quality of the irregulars was not identical, given to their highly heterogenous nature. Some members of the irregulars were better than the others. In the words of Dodd, “The Arnauts, for instance, the Albanian Mussulmans, seem to be a fine set of fellows. Scorning the European costume, they are yet not so reckless as the volunteers who come in from Asia Minor. The Arnaut, with his jacket of fine red cloth or silk, his braided and buttoned breast, his white many-folded fustinella ... some of the Albanians are

³⁵⁸ Paton, p. 34.

always in the Turkish armies.”³⁵⁹ Despite their unruly and undisciplined characteristics, the possibility of their useful employment in the war had never been disregarded by the French and the British. Thus, the irregulars were employed in the French and British armies, although these initiatives were incomplete because the outcomes could not be transferred onto the battlefield (see chapter 6.3. for the social outcomes of the Ottoman *başibozuks*).

4.3.1.6. The Ottoman Cossacks

In the 19th century, there was a good number of Cossack populace in the Ottoman territory, particularly in Dobruja. In addition to, Potkali (Zaporozhian) Cossacks and heretic İgnat (Nekrasov) Cossacks, there were also various types of runaways from the Russian (or Ukrainian) territory, who would live together with these Cossack stocks in Dobruja. The number of Cossacks in the Ottoman Empire was hardly stable on account of the continuous influx and outflow. However, the Cossacks played some role in the Russo-Ottoman wars throughout the 19th century. Accordingly, the Ottoman Cossacks constituted an important component of the famous (or rather infamous) project of “Sultan’s Cossack” regiment under the command of Michał Czajkowski (Mehmed Sadık Pasha) during the Crimean War. The Cossacks were also an integral part of the intelligence activities of both antagonists on the Danube. Both the Ottoman and Russian armies feverishly endeavored to facilitate Cossacks living in Dobruja to collect information pertaining to the enemy.

³⁵⁹ Dodd, pp. 32-33.

The Porte traditionally employed some of its non-Muslim subjects in a variety of auxiliary services. Forces recruited from Serbs, Greeks, Orthodox and Catholic Albanians, and other hardy mountain peoples of the Balkans were known as *Martoloses*, and they performed such services as guard duty along the frontiers, strategic roads, and mountain passes. These forces operated in the Ottoman service for centuries. The Ottoman navy also relied on the services of Greek sailors. In the modern era, the first non-Muslims to be officially admitted to the regular Ottoman armed forces were recruited from the Cossack population of the Dobruja after the annihilation of the Janissaries.³⁶⁰ The Crimean War witnessed another project in the recruitment of Christians. When the number of Christians in the navy was in decline because of the lack of trust to the Greek sailors and when the plans of Christian conscription were all abandoned, the establishment of Cossack regiments under the Ottoman banner was in itself an interesting project. In fact, the man who established and commanded these troops was a fascinating figure.

Michał Czajkowski was born in the province of Volynia (contemporary northwestern Ukraine). He was a romantic Polish writer primarily focusing on Cossack cultural heritage and a political émigré who was working for the establishment of a free Cossack Ukraine. Under the Russian pressure for this extradition to Russia, he converted to Islam as Mehmed Sadık Pasha. The Cossack regiment, under the command of Mehmed Sadık Pasha, primarily consisted of Nekrasov (Ignat)³⁶¹ and Zaporog Cossacks and Polish volunteers, as well as Bulgarians, Greeks and Gypsies. There were at least 100 criminals (*hajduks*) enrolled

³⁶⁰ Avigdor Levy, "The Contribution of Zaporozhian Cossacks to Ottoman Military Reform: Documents and Notes", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. VI, no. 3 (September 1982), pp. 373-374.

³⁶¹ These men were former Don Cossacks who fled to the Ottoman territory during the first half of the eighteenth century. Some of them were living in Dobruja and some in Manyas in Anatolia. Their name derived from their former leader Ignat Fyodorovich Nekrasov. They were also called Lipovan signifying their form of Christianity.

in this regiment. After the initial successes of the regiment many volunteers registered, including the famous Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz. At the beginning of the war, Nekrasov Cossacks were mixed with the Muslim forces.³⁶² These forces used primarily for reconnaissance activities. Cossack regiments were first used in Dobruja region and subsequently before Selistre, in the Principalities, and in the Crimea.³⁶³ The success of the project also led to the establishment of the second Cossack regiment under the protégé of Napoleon III, which would be under the command of Graf Wladislaw Zamoyski.

4.3.2. The Russian Army

The Russian army was predominantly composed of regular troops despite the existence of a reserve. The components of the regular forces included the infantry and cavalry guards; the grenadiers and six infantry corps; two reserve cavalry corps; and detached forces of the Caucasus, Orenburg, and Siberia. The Russian military was based on three major institutions: the Minister of War, the commander-in-chief of the Active Army, and the main staff. The Minister of War handled personnel, supplies, and financial and legal matters, and he commanded the fifth and sixth infantry corps. The Active Army, consisting of the four infantry corps located on the western frontiers, was under the command of Prince Paskevich. Obviously, Nicholas I did not want a powerful commander to control the Russian army alone. The tsar himself controlled the guard, grenadier and reserve cavalry corps as well as the military formations in the Caucasus, Orenburg and Siberia, thereby having his own authority felt in the Russian army.

³⁶² RGVIA f. 846, op. 16, d. 5399, l. 180.

³⁶³ RGVIA f. 846, op. 16, d. 5415, l. 7.

The Russian infantry corps consisted of three divisions, each with four regiments. The regiments were composed of three battalions, each containing 1,000 men. Thus, an army corps included 36 battalions. To these battalions, one rifle and one sapper battalion were added. The infantry corps, save the guards, also had a light cavalry division of 32 squadrons. The cavalry divisions were composed of four regiments, each containing approximately 1,000 men. The light cavalry—the hussars and the uhlans—had a saber and carbine. The cuirassiers, the heavy cavalry, were armed with a heavy straight sword, but they had no fire-arms. The dragoons, who could fight both mounted and on foot, were armed with a musket, a bayonet and a light cavalry sword.

The training of the Russian infantry and cavalry was primarily directed toward displays and ceremonial parades that had little meaning on the battlefield. Thus, the Russian soldiers did not learn much in terms of the real battlefield tactics and strategies. Russia obviously neglected military innovations during the first half of the 19th century. Russia's economic backwardness in comparison to the Western powers hindered the modernization of the large and expensive army. The never-ending campaigns also resulted in an enormous burden on the Russian economy.³⁶⁴ The glories against the Ottomans and Napoleon convinced the Russian authorities of the superiority of their army. Thus, the development of small-arms had been neglected for decades, and the infantry acquired percussion muskets only in the 1840s. The Russian infantry continued to perceive and use the bayonet as the master of combat rather than adapting itself to the latest technology and modern fighting. There was strong opposition to the introduction of breech-loading weapons, as they would discourage the infantryman from engaging in hand-to-hand combat. In fact, the

³⁶⁴ Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I*, p. 100.

Russian infantry tradition was futile and outmoded. The soldiers fought in dense columns and relied on bayonets.³⁶⁵ Tight columns were considered to be useful to maintain discipline in large military formations. Furthermore, the Russian army training had been directed toward fighting the Ottomans, and fighting *en masse* in tight formations was emphasized to counter the mobility of the Ottoman forces who attacked in scattered groups from all sides. The Russian officers and soldiers had been so disciplined that they would not take any initiative on the battlefield.

However, the artillery and field engineers maintained a high level of military competence, as they were rare examples of Russian skills on the battlefield. The artillery and field engineers had graduated from specialized schools. The Russian artillery was exalted by European observers. Thus, firepower was supplied by the artillery rather than by infantry in battles.

The small staff organization in the capital, which coordinated the movement and quartering of troops, was the only permanent general staff body in existence.³⁶⁶ The Russian army was scarcely a modern military machine. However, despite its poor administration and inadequate resources, the Russian army continued to act as an effective military apparatus. Russian soldiers who were poorly equipped, fed, and trained stood firm in the battle. Only when the Russians confronted the modern European armies in the Crimea in 1854 would the glory and invincibility of the Russian army come to an end.

³⁶⁵ Figes, p. 118; Seaton, p. 32.

³⁶⁶ Seaton, p. 25.

4.3.2.1. The Number of Russian Troops

From 1816 to 1855, forty levies provided 3,158,199 recruits.³⁶⁷ Because of their long-term service (twenty or twenty-five years) and the harsh conditions of military life, it was unlikely that recruits would ever return home. The long marching during the Russo-Ottoman wars and the lack of medical care killed the Russian soldiers through diseases, particularly scurvy, malaria, and dysentery. The high rate of death in the rank and file resulted in a chronic shortage of manpower despite its long tradition of being the largest army in Europe.

Although military statistics and records were highly developed in Russia compared with the Ottoman Empire, the number of Russian troops during the Crimean War is far from certain. This uncertainty may result from differences between the actual and planned numbers or from various bureaucratic mechanisms that might have produced different numbers. According to Bogdanovich, there were 494,000 regular forces, approximately 135,000 reserve troops, and some Cossack forces during the Crimean War.³⁶⁸ He also remarked that the actual forces were smaller than the planned numbers.

The Infantry	The Guards	38 battalions	38,000 men
	The Grenadiers	38 battalions	38,000 men
	Six infantry corps	300 battalions	300,000 men
	The Reserve sapper battalion	2 battalion	2,000 men
In Total		378 battalions	378,000 men
The Cavalry	The Guards	68 squadrons	9,000 men
	7 light cavalry divisions	224 squadrons	38,080

³⁶⁷ Elise Kimerling Wirtschafter, *From Serf to Russian Soldier* (Princeton, 1990), p. 3.

³⁶⁸ Bogdanovich, vol I, *Prilozheniya*, p. 16.

			men
	1 st reserve cavalry corps	80 squadrons	13,600 men
	2 nd reserve cavalry corps	80 squadrons	13,600 men
	2 horse-pioneer divisions	4 squadrons	1,000 men
In Total		456 squadrons	75,280 men
The Artillery	The Guards	the infantry	12 batteries 96 guns
		the Horse	5 batteries 40 guns
	The Grenadiers	the infantry	15 batteries 120 guns
		the Horse	2 batteries 16 guns
	The Field	the infantry	72 batteries 864 guns
		the Horse	12 batteries 96 guns
		the Cossack	9 batteries 72 guns
	2 Horse artillery division	12 batteries 96 guns	2,580 men
		139 bat. 1400 guns	31,130 men
	7 sapper brigades		9,808 men

Russian forces according to Bogdanovich

Zayonchkovskii provided much higher numbers for the Russian army. According to a Russian document that was furnished by Zayonchkovskii, the number of Russian troops approached one and a half million in 1853.³⁶⁹

Regular Forces		
Active Forces		
	Officer	Rank and File
Infantry	15,382	581,845
Cavalry	4,983	86,282
Foot Artillery	1,784	40,896
Horse Artillery	339	8,057
Garrison Artillery	793	40,681
Sapper	364	15,944

³⁶⁹ Zayonchkovskii, *Prilozheniya* I, p. 476.

Different Commands	988	35,302
Corps of Domestic Guard	2,430	144,934
Total	27,009	953,948
Reserves		
Infantry	736	121,125
Cavalry		24,210
Artillery and Sapper		13,540
Total		158,875
Irregular Forces		
Irregulars	3,647	242,203
Total Forces	31,392	1,365,786

Russian forces according to Zayonchkovskii

According to a secret study conducted by the Russian War Ministry in 1870, Russia assembled an army of 1,742,343 men with 31,954 officers by 1856. With the addition of irregulars and militia, the sum was beyond 2,500,000 men.³⁷⁰

Although different numbers are reported for the Russian army, it was certainly the largest army in the world on the eve of the Crimean War. Although Russia had difficulties building and transferring reserve troops during the war, it had the opportunity to assemble large forces incomparable with any European army. In 1853, 199,438 reservists were called to duty. Approximately 455,000 men joined the army as fresh drafts in 1853 and 1854. In 1855, more than 300,000 militiamen were assembled. Thus, during the Crimean War, the Russian army acquired 865,762 newly enlisted men and 215,197 reservists.³⁷¹

The Russian active army—the main force fighting in the European war—was composed of 6 corps, each containing approximately 50,000 men. Three of these

³⁷⁰ Baumann, p. 138.

³⁷¹ Curtiss, p. 111.

corps would be used in the Danubian theatre—the 3rd, 4th, and 5th. In the Caucasus, as in the previous encounters, modest forces were mobilized. These forces never exceeded 100,000 men during the war. In July 1853, only a modest number passed the Prut River: the 4th army, the second brigade of the 15th division, the 5th light cavalry division, and the 25th, 34th, and 37th Don Cossack regiments, totaling 71,869 men. There were a total of 68 ½ battalions, 64 squadrons, 50 Cossack hundreds and 208 guns in the Danubian Principalities.³⁷² In August and September, the gendarme squadron and the 9th, 38th, and 40th Don Cossack regiments moved into the Principalities; from December 1853 to January 1854, the first brigade of the 15th division, the second brigade of the 14th division, the 5th rifles and the 5th sapper battalions, the 3rd army, and the 22nd and 42nd Don Cossack regiments entered the area, totaling 75,312 men moving into the Principalities. The last wave came from April to June 1854, when the 2nd reserve cavalry corps with two Ural regiments, the 6th infantry division, the 16th infantry division, the first brigade of the 6th light cavalry division and a Cossack regiment, totaling 48,702 men, entered into the Ottoman territories.³⁷³ They were all Russian forces employed in the Balkan theater. Thus, from the summer of 1853 to the summer of 1854, a total of 198,485 men entered into the Danubian Principalities.

4.3.2.2. The Commander-in-Chief

Nicholas I not only liked military life but also lived as a soldier. He was usually in uniform, and he slept on a camp bed. The Russian tsar likely considered himself a commander-in-chief rather than a politician. By 1840, 10 ministries were

³⁷² Zayonchkovskii, vol. 2, part 1, p. 109.

³⁷³ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 183, footnote 1.

held by generals, whereas civilian ministers were only used for foreign affairs, education and justice.

Field Marshal Paskevich was certainly the most influential military figure in Russia during the reign of Nicholas I. He captured Erivan in 1828, marched to Erzurum in 1829, and suppressed the Polish revolt in 1831. He was called Erievanskii and Warsawskii to complement his victories. However, most importantly, he was the “Father-Commander”, as the tsar called him. Nicholas was under Paskevich’s command when he was a grand duke, and Nicholas developed a high respect for Paskevich. The tsar relied heavily on Paskevich’s advice and judgment. Enjoying the complete confidence of Nicholas, Paskevich expected from other generals absolute obedience to his own authority. Count Chernyshev was another important personality during the reign of Nicholas. Chernyshev continued to retain the post of War Minister in 1827-1853, but he could not enjoy the full power of a Minister of War because many functionaries of the army, such as Marshal Paskevich, had direct access to the tsar himself. Moreover, Nicholas frequently interfered in military matters.

The major figure in terms of the Danubian front or perhaps for the Crimean War in general was Prince Mikhail Dmitriyevich Gorchakov. Initially, he was the commander of the Russian armies in the Principalities. After the withdrawal of the Russian forces, Gorchakov became the commander of the South Army centered in Bessarabia, and he was ultimately the commander-in-chief of the Crimean Army. However, his control over those armies was destined to be limited from the start because of the continuing role of Prince Paskevich. During the critical siege of Silistre, Paskevich literally took the command, and showed that the command of

Gorchakov had been only a provisional assignment. Prince Gorchakov lacked charisma and initiative to make himself a real commander of the war. He was not a capable and determinant commander; the Russian army was terribly lacking in such commanders during the Crimean War. The ambitions of Nicholas and the concerns of Paskevich caused uncertainty in the Russian plans and activities in the Balkans. Gorchakov never enjoyed the actual command of the Russian army when both the tsar and Paskevich attempted to direct him in his every action. However, given the duration of his command and the key positions that he held, Gorchakov was the first and foremost Russian commander in the Crimean War.

4.3.2.3. The Officers

A Russian officer in the army of Nicholas I may have been a graduate of the cadet corps, a volunteer noble or in rare cases—a ranker. During the first half of the 19th century, military education was expanded, and a large number of officers received an education. The War Academy, the Nikolaevsk Engineer Academy, and the Mikhailovsk Artillery Academy were the top educational institutions for the Russian army. Nonetheless, the officer corps of the Russian peasant army was almost entirely composed of nobles, who had almost no formal military education. Thus, the great majority of the Russian officers had learned military life and fighting by serving in the army. Despite reforms during the reign of Nicholas I, the Russian army remained far behind the armies of other European states.³⁷⁴ Most importantly, the officer corps was poorly educated, especially compared with their European counterparts.

³⁷⁴ Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I*, p. 112.

Unquestioning obedience was one of the main characteristics of the Russian army. Suspicions of the tsar about his officers as a result of the Decembrist revolution played a role here. This suspicion, in turn, hindered the development of the capability of taking initiatives during the fighting. Thus, the Russian officers required little intellectual capacity, and this system rarely produced able generals. During the Crimean War, there was an insufficient number of able commanders at the top commands. Curtiss claimed as follows: "A few able man had risen to command—such as Rüdiger, Bariatinskii, Lüders, and Khrulev - but the key positions during the Crimean War were held by elderly commanders of little or no ability—Paskevich, Gorchakov, and Menshikov."³⁷⁵ Menkov was also harsh in his criticisms of the Russian army command. He accused many Russian commanders of being talentless, rude, and arrogant. Although General Osten-Sacken was one of the rare exceptions, even well-praised General Schilder was not immune from this criticism.³⁷⁶

The Russian commanders, who viewed the troops as their estate, enjoyed enormous power over their men. Thus, poor noblemen became officers to use their position for economic gain. Irregularities in the army logistics and supply offered many opportunities for officers to engage in fraud.

4.3.2.4. The Soldiers

Russia possessed a peasant army. Serfdom provided the raw material for the army. The system depended on a long period of service for serfs. Although it was not

³⁷⁵ Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I*, p. 369.

³⁷⁶ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, pp. 175-176.

an effective and modern military system, the recruitment of the serfs was a response to Russia's need for a large army to be used both in the country and abroad. A system of brutal discipline was an inherent aspect of the Russian army. When mobilization rose to higher numbers during war, the quality of the recruits unsurprisingly declined, as landowners and villages attempted to retain their able farmers. A report from 1848 showed that during recent levies, one-third of the conscripts had been rejected because they had failed to meet the necessary physical requirements. Because the term of military service was more than 20 years and because there was no possibility of actually returning the village, self-mutilation appeared to be a good solution to escape drafting.

Because the Russian army was composed of serfs, the soldiers were long-enduring and docile. However, educating these people was dangerous, as literacy could enable them to question the justice of the military system and to protest against harshness and corruptions in military life. Thus, nearly all troops were illiterate. Official figures from the 1850s showed that in a group of approximately 120,000 men, only 264 men were able to read or write. Abuses and inequalities were standard in recruitment procedures.³⁷⁷ Worse yet, the inefficient system of supply made the recruits dependent on their commanders. Soldiers were sacrificed in large numbers for minor gains by their commanders, who cared little about the men under their command. Thus, the Tsarist army lost men at a much higher rate than any of the other European armies. The vast majority of Russian soldiers were not killed in battle but died from wounds and diseases that may not have been fatal if there had been proper logistics and medical service. Every Russian campaign brought enormous losses behind the front, as in the 1828-29 war, the 1830-31 Polish campaign, and the

³⁷⁷ Wirtschafter, p. 22.

1849 Hungarian campaign. In 1849, only 708 men died in the fighting, whereas 57,000 Russian soldiers were hospitalized. Even in peacetime the average rate of sickness in the Russian army was 65 percent.³⁷⁸

4.3.2.5. The Cossacks

The Cossacks likely represented the best light cavalry in Europe. They were not conscripted as regular soldiers, but they had a military way of life. The Cossacks were the finest troops in Europe for outpost duty, and they operated in small groups contrary to the Russian infantry. Lord Lucan, the commander of the British cavalry in the Crimea, who had been present with the Russian Army during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1829, described the regular Russian cavalry as being “as bad as could be, but the Cossacks could be damnably troublesome to an enemy, especially in a retreat.”³⁷⁹ The Cossacks in Bessarabia and the Don Cossacks constituted a total force of more than 40,000 men.

The Russian army also recruited volunteers from the Ottoman Christian population. However, there were only insignificant numbers of these volunteers, as Russia did not want to alienate Austria.

³⁷⁸ Wirtschafter, p. 35.

³⁷⁹ Russell, p. 118.

4.3.2.6. The Muslims in the Russian Army

Russia possessed a Christian army. As explained above, the burden of military service was on the shoulders of the Russian peasants. However, the non-Slavic stock of the Russian Empire, who were primarily Muslims were also used in the irregular forces. During the Crimean War, the South Caucasian Muslim Cavalry Regiment, the Dagestanian Cavalry Regiment, the Caucasian Mountaineer Cavalry Division, the Crimean Tatar Light Cavalry Squadron, the Anapa Mountaineer Half-squadron, the Caucasian Mountaineer Light Cavalry Half-squadron, and some forces of Lezgis and Bashkirs constituted the Muslim contribution to the Russian war effort.³⁸⁰ These irregulars were used efficiently on the Caucasus front, but desertions were widespread among the Muslims in the Balkans.

4.3.3. Rival Armies Compared

Russia and the Ottoman Empire both had vast geographies with peoples of various ethnicities and beliefs. Thus, the major task to be performed by both armies was to maintain domestic security and to promote coherence and tranquility in society. Accordingly, the regular Ottoman army was often commissioned to protect order in many provinces by suppressing those who were unsatisfied with the *Tanzimat* reforms. In the early 1850s, the Rumelian army suppressed the revolt in Bosnia and Montenegro, and the Arabistan army subdued the Druzes. Likewise, the Caucasus and Poland were the regions that posed the greatest threat to Tsarist rule. Nicholas I fought for supreme control in the colossal empire of the world with his army and gendarmerie. Thus, a great proportion of the Russian army was reserved

³⁸⁰ Zayonchkovskii, *Prilozheniya* I, pp. 474-475.

for domestic security. The Porte, at the expense of domestic security and order, sent all types of military units to the fronts during the Crimean War. The Russian and Ottoman military organizations were more suitable for maintaining internal security and suppressing disorders than for waging a war on an international scale.

The Ottoman high command during the Crimean War was the most stable command in the nineteenth century for the Danube theater. The confidence in Ömer Lütfi Pasha increased with his military successes on the battlefield, although the battles were not decisive. By contrast, Russia lacked a self-confident commander with a clearly defined strategy. The numerical superiority of the Russian forces against the Ottomans was always a great handicap for the Porte to defeat Russia in the long term. However, at the beginning of the war, there was scarcely any Russian supremacy over the Ottoman troops in terms of the numbers of troops. Rather, the Ottomans appeared to be more numerous than their opponents.

There was a large difference between the forces that exist on paper and those that actually appear under arms in both Russia and the Ottoman Empire. This difference is apparent primarily because of the widespread corruption in both military establishments. The Russian army lacked the logistical capability to mobilize troops in wartime. The Ottoman logistics were no better. In fact, corruption hindered the effective usage of the sources of both countries. Illness and mortality were the primary threats to the effectiveness of the army. Inadequate material resources, especially poor nutrition and housing, represented a major threat to the troops. Plague, cholera, and various types of fevers were the most common killers.

In both armies, relations between the officers and the units under their command were similar. Both the Russian and Ottoman officers attempted to maximize their economic profits at the expense of the rank and file.

Tarle claimed that the Ottoman army was better equipped and uniformed than the Russian forces.³⁸¹ The recruitment system of the Ottoman army was modern. A universal conscription and reserve system was the main pillar of modern armies in Europe. Service in the Ottoman army was short, which led to the establishment of experienced reserves. The Ottoman Empire, which possessed a narrow pool of conscription, needed an efficient system for utilizing the Muslim population. The Russians did not have a problem building a large army. However, the problem was the need for reserve troops to be used during the war. Furthermore, the Russians did not possess efficient logistical operations to transfer troops to the front. The Russian social system, which was based on serfdom, did not allow for the establishment of a modern competent army; rather, it provided a large pool of recruits who could be used comfortably in both peace and wartime. Curtiss rightly argued: “Neither a short term of service, nor a system of training that stressed adaptability and individual initiative, seemed to be suited to Russia’s needs, in the eyes of the Tsar.”³⁸²

Russia, which had long been undefeated on the battlefield, appeared to be invincible. The Ottoman army, on the contrary, had not experienced significant success for a long time. Therefore, it was not surprising that the Ottomans were more prone to reforming their army. Both armies had their own problems, but the Crimean War showed that in the age of industrialization, the armies needed to undergo continuous change and adaptation. A static army, such as the Russian army, was

³⁸¹ Tarle, vol. I, p. 265.

³⁸² Curtiss, *Russian Army under Nicholas I*, p. 116.

destined to be an outmoded military force. The Ottomans were more willing to change and modernize, especially in terms of the army. The Ottoman army would serve as a necessary and suitable field for modernization in the nineteenth century.

Both the Russian and Ottoman armies were primarily created as forces to protect internal order. The Ottoman army also had the mission of protecting the borders. The Russian army had no strong neighbor of which to be frightened. Its army also appeared to be sufficiently powerful for the conquest in Ottoman lands. On the contrary, the Ottomans demonstrated an urgent necessity to have a modern army on the eve of the Crimean War.

4.4. Logistics: A Difficult Endeavor

4.4.1. Introduction

Although most war activities were the ordinary details and incidents of camp life, with all its harsh aspects, the battles, which took only a few hours or a few days at most, were generally more visible aspects of war. Logistics—the movement, quartering, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel and the maintenance of supply and equipment—were relevant to the whole period of war. To organize the armies, assemble them into fighting and marching order, and reserve stores of provisions and ammunition were not easy tasks. Armies in the Crimean Campaign paid dearly for underestimating the importance of activities behind the front activities. One participant in the Crimean War noted that “the fighting portion of the Army is the only thing to be taken consideration; and this was the very idea, which, entertained in higher quarters, led to such lamentable consequences at the opening of

the Campaign.”³⁸³ Throughout the Crimean War, logistical failures took more life than the battles did. Complex by nature, Crimean War logistics were more challenging due to the extensive geography of the war’s location.

The nature of logistics changed as the conflict evolved from a Russo-Ottoman war into an Allied campaign. Each movement of the armies demanded the creation of new logistical bases. After the arrival of the British and French troops, first Gelibolu and then Varna became the base of operations. The fighting on the Danube soon ceased and reinitiated in the Crimea. The logistical bases of the Allied campaign in the Crimea were the Ottoman ports. Initially, 80,000 French and British troops were assembled in Ottoman territory, which increased to 150,000 as the hostilities continued. Therefore, the Porte had two logistical tasks for the Crimean War: to supply its own armies and to assist the logistical activities of the allied forces. Supplying the army on two fronts was difficult, but satisfying the needs of the Allied powers during the war was even more difficult. Provisions (bread, biscuits, meats, vegetables, drinks, flour, peas, beans, vinegar, barley, hay, sugar, and coffee), ammunition (muskets, shells, and cannon balls), clothing (skin, stockings, gloves, fur and undershirts), drugs, and other materials needed for war (tents, wood, and carts) were prepared and sent to the front. Shelters, hospitals, and entrenchments were prepared and repaired. The burden of the war forced the Ottoman government to take its first foreign loan.

4.4.2. Supplying the Ottoman Army

³⁸³ Lascelles Wraxall, *Camp Life or Passages from the Story of a Contingent* (London, 1860), pp. 194-195.

When the war was a classical Russo-Ottoman confrontation, the Ottoman government attempted to supply the assembled troops on the Danube and the Caucasus. The Ottomans concentrated approximately 120,000 men on the Danube. Fortresses and other fortifications were repaired, and others were built. Troops were moved, quartered (*ibate*), supplied (*iaşe*) and hospitalized. Buildings intended to serve as hospitals, storehouses, and bakeries were built, repaired or rented. The Ottomans had the entire summer of 1853 to complete preparations for a possible war. Major military depots in the Balkans and Rumelia were located in Silistre, Rusçuk, Vidin, Varna, Şumnu, Sofia, Edirne, Manastr, and Gelibolu. The Porte endeavored to store materials in these locations shortly before the war.³⁸⁴ Kovalevskii made the following claim: “The Turkish government, which was prompted by fanaticism of ulemas and promises of foreign governments, showed great activity and energy in gathering and arming its military forces.”³⁸⁵

The Ottoman soldiers were well provided with excellent tents, which were strong, durable, and water-tight, while the Egyptians used old tents during their encampment on the shores of the Bosphorus.³⁸⁶ There were approximately 25 *saka* in the Ottoman regiments whose task was to provide good water to the soldiers.³⁸⁷ General Prim inspected the rations of the Ottoman soldiers in the Selimiye barracks. Brown bread, rice and meat were allocated to the soldiers, who considered it an excellent meal.³⁸⁸ Prim’s observations were based on formal inspections, and thus may have resulted in a high opinion of the Ottoman supply system: “The Turkish Government supplies everything to the soldiers, free of cost, viz.: rations, arms,

³⁸⁴ RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 45, l. 14 ob.

³⁸⁵ Kovalevskii, p. 72.

³⁸⁶ Rhodes, p. 21.

³⁸⁷ *Accounts and Papers*, “Reports from Commissioners 1857-58”, vol. 19 (London, 1858), p. 9.

³⁸⁸ Rhodes, p. 15; Prim, p. 83.

accoutrements, and clothing of every description. Each article is of the best of their kind; and great care has been taken to furnish rations of superior quality.”³⁸⁹

The needs of troops were met via the stores (*anbar*). Durable materials were already stacked in the storehouses and would be distributed from this stock according to necessity. The storehouses also provided documents for the need for bread and meat that would be supplied by bakeries and butgeries.³⁹⁰ Butgeries and bakeries were essential in wartime, and their organization and control were important for the health of soldiers. The butgeries in Şumnu were transferred out of the city because the remnants of the animals could have caused disease. Furthermore, the quality of bread did not always meet requirements. Bread prepared in Şumnu would be checked to determine whether it was sufficiently cooked. Toilets also needed to be cleaned, their locations frequently changed, and their grounds required deep digging.³⁹¹

In addition, vegetables were crucial for the health of soldiers. Therefore, it was requested that soldiers be given cucumber. The Ottoman soldiers were also given soup twice a week, and when possible, meals from vegetables would be prepared twice a week.³⁹²

Devoid of a commissariat, the Ottoman logistics depended on the time-honored system of contracts by which the strategic task of supplying the army was conveyed to trusted or favored contractors.³⁹³ The aim of contractors was certainly to make profit rather than to best serve the needs of the Ottoman soldiers. Supply lines would be secured by the military depots in various military quarters and fortifications in

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/5a.

³⁹¹ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/9.

³⁹² ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/8

³⁹³ [Hikmet Süer], p. 157.

which various materials were stored. The system of storing necessary materials did not always serve the military interests well, as the products could not be preserved in optimal condition. Thus, the supplied materials stored in peacetime were generally thrown away and replaced with new materials. Stores were generally stacked with necessary materials on the eve of the war, but the logistical department of the army was not sufficiently capable of transporting supplies to the front via the poor-quality Ottoman roads in wartime.

The Ottoman soldiers were both drilling and working on the construction of redoubts.³⁹⁴ After August 1853, when most of the fortifications had already been constructed or repaired, soldiers would work fewer hours. Ömer Lütfi Pasha was satisfied with the efforts of the Ottoman troops during the fortification work.

The Ottoman transportation system was one of the worst aspects of the Ottoman military. Ottoman carts were used with oxen rather than with horses. However, the oxen were scarce and were slow in transporting goods.³⁹⁵ The Ottoman roads, which were in poor condition, also increased the difficulty of transportation. The British commisioner to the Ottoman army portrayed a gloomy picture of the Ottoman supply system: “I fear, however, that the Ottoman army cannot undertake offensive operations, as they are not clothed sufficiently to enable them to resist the cold of a winter campaigning, and the want of money presses hard on them. The whole army is on the average eight months in arrears of pay, besides a debt for

³⁹⁴ ATASE, 9-5-1/8a

³⁹⁵ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 101.

materials and provisions of about 25,000,000 piastres, making a total debt of about 50,000,000 piastres.”³⁹⁶

4.4.3. Supplying the Allies: British, French and Sardinian Troops in the Ottoman Empire

The war was waged in the Ottoman and Russian territories British and French troops had to meet some of their needs in the land where they resided because bringing necessary materials from their home countries was difficult. Locating and transporting supplies in an unfamiliar country was challenging. Using carts and horses for transportation, purchasing bullocks and vegetables, and even acquiring fuel for cooking proved difficult throughout the war. Warm clothing was always scarce. Troops were exposed to hard labor without sufficient clothing. Many soldiers died because of deprivations.

Transporting and accommodating troops in barracks and camps throughout the empire took several months. The preparations of both the British and French armies took a long time. They resided in the Ottoman territories for 5 months before the initiation of the Crimean Campaign. During their presence, the Ottoman government offered its best as the host country. After the British and French troops arrived, Istanbul turned into a large military camp: “The influx of English and French was so great, that every street wore a military air. Especially in Pera, the district long assigned to foreign residents and visitors, was the presence of the Allies observable. The restaurants and drinking-saloons were well patronized... Stiff-laced, of course

³⁹⁶ “Captain Simmons to General Lord Raglan, Ibrail, 17 November 1853”, *Russian War, 1854: Baltic and Black Sea Official Correspondence*, Bonner-Smith, D. and Dewar, A. C. (eds.) (London, 1943), pp. 398-401.

newly arrived English officers, Frenchmen, wholly given to the arts of war, and modestly uniformed members of the Ottoman arm, mingled in the excited thoroughfares, and pipes and tobacco were most liberally indulged by all.”³⁹⁷ British Sergeant Gowing described Varna after the armies arrived: “At Varna we found ourselves mixed up with Turks, Egyptians, French, English, Maltese, Jews, Greeks, etc, it was a regular Babel.”³⁹⁸ Soldiers were initially concentrated in camps at Gelibolu and Istanbul and then in the Balkans, including Varna, Devna, Aladin and surroundings. The presence of the Allied armies in Ottoman territory had social and economic impacts as well as political and military implications.

Before their formal declarations of war, French and British fleets were already anchored in Istanbul. Supplying these fleets was a priority for the Ottoman government while its army was also waging a war against Russia. In the spring of 1854, when both France and Britain declared war on Russia, their troops gradually assembled in Ottoman territory, and the straits were crowded with Allied vessels. The declaration of war was marked by the rapid transfer of significant expeditionary forces to the vicinity of the Black Sea. The first French detachment left Marseilles on 19 March and landed at Gelibolu on 31 March 1854. Fresh divisions continued to assemble near Toulon and Marseilles in the following months. Malta served as the principal staging post for Britain, and successive detachments of the British Army began to gather at Gelibolu and Üsküdar in April and May 1854. The first part of the British contingent left Malta on 31 March and disembarked at Gelibolu on 5 April. Lord Raglan arrived there on 29 April, and Marshal Saint-Arnaud arrived on 7 May. The French took the best houses in the Muslim quarter, forcing the British to be content with the hostile Greek part of Gelibolu. British troops were soon sent on to

³⁹⁷ McCormick, p. 199.

³⁹⁸ Gowing, p. 16.

Scutari, where their entire force was eventually concentrated. There the British occupied the Selimiye barracks, later to become famous as a British hospital. On 7 May, approximately 17,500 British troops were located at Scutari and Kuleli and 4,000 at Gelibolu. By the end of May, the French had 37,000 men and 5,500 horses at Gelibolu.

The Allied troops later moved to Varna to support the Ottoman army in the Balkans. Allied forces' movement to Varna began on 29 May and was completed in July. Four British divisions were sent by sea. In June, about 40,000 French and 15,000 British forces landed in Varna and camped in and around the town. Thus, Varna became the new base of operations. Vast stores of food were assembled; ponies, mules, carts were collected; and ammunition and forage were stored while intensive construction activities were underway. Large supplies of provisions, ammunition, war materials, and hospital supplies were hastily sent forward. Varna continued to receive soldiers from the Crimea during the campaign, particularly from Gözleve.

The French army consisted of four divisions of infantry, under the orders of General Canrobert, General Bosquet, Prince Napoleon, and General Foray. There were also eight batteries of artillery. The British army consisted of four divisions. The first, under the Duke of Cambridge, was composed of the Guards and the Highland Brigade; the second was commanded by Sir De Lacy Evans; Sir Richard England commanded the third division; and the Light Division, had Sir George Brown for its chief.

The French had better commissariat and medical departments. French soldiers' military lives were more comfortable than their British counterparts' experiences.

Although British logistics improved during the war, the Ottoman soldier was more neglected as the war continued. British and French soldiers received bread or biscuits; sugar; rice; fresh or salt meat; vegetables; coffee, cocoa or tea; wine, brandy or rum; wood, coal or charcoal; and candles.

The Allies appropriated the principal buildings of Istanbul for their own purposes. Many prominent buildings in and around Istanbul were converted into hospitals or quarters for Allied forces. They scarcely left accommodation for the sick and wounded Ottoman soldiers. The French were quartered in the barracks of Davutpaşa, Maltepe, Ramızçiftlik, Taşkışla, Gümüşsuyu and Gülhane, in the Russian embassy, in the military schools, at Maslak and in the neighborhood of St. Sophia. The British were quartered at the Selimiye barracks in Scutari.³⁹⁹ Many houses on the Bosphorus were also rented for the Allied officers and the owners evacuated their homes (see, chapter 5.3.).

As the British and French forces gathered in Ottoman territory, the number of sick soldiers unsurprisingly increased. Initially, French hospitals were in better condition than British hospitals.⁴⁰⁰ The lack of accommodations in Istanbul forced the Allied armies to open new hospitals in other Ottoman cities such as İzmir.

The Allied forces depended upon Ottoman sources to establish their supply lines in the Balkans. Bullock carts (*araba*) were among the urgent necessities for the supply system in the Balkans:

The roads were too bad to permit our admitting that the wretched wooden country arobas would ever be of service in a hasty movement, and yet, when we were at last obliged to depend on them, none of them were to be had. For the land transport of the British army alone, 13,000 horses were required; and

³⁹⁹ Badem, p. 330; McCormick, p. 204.

⁴⁰⁰ McCormick, p. 174.

at this time we had very little more than 1200, and what was worse, there seemed very little prospect of getting any. Had we attempted an advance towards the Danube the troops must have started literally without anything – either baggage, provisions, or ammunition. The Turkish government officials and Omar Pacha made an effort to help the English over this difficulty by sending in 350 arobas with their drivers to Varna.⁴⁰¹

Lack of carts negatively affected health care during the war: “Owing to the want of arobas the efficiency of the medical staff suffered as much.” The Allied troops were thus not in no condition to take the field in the summer of 1854. Trevelyan claimed that the British forces were totally dependent for *arabas* upon Ömer Lütfi Pasha “who had the entire resources of Bulgaria at his command.”⁴⁰²

Terrible roads hindered the arrival of provisions and caused shortages in the armies in the Crimea. “The want of transport to convey provisions materially increased all these difficulties; the men round Alydeen seldom got their full rations – that is, either the sugar, coffee, or meat were deficient, and on very many occasions they had only bread and water for their breakfasts. Even such a simple article as rice was not to be had on any terms. Frequently the Light Division was without breakfast altogether, and very frequently the men spent their day’s pay, when they had it, in buying small black loaves and sour wine at the canteens.”⁴⁰³ The British commissioner succinctly described how difficult it was to prepare supplies for the army:

The most unpleasant part was that of having to superintend the butchery for the Brigade, for which I had placed under my orders two butchers from each regiment... It was not a pleasant job, in the steaming hot Eastern mornings, to have to ride down to the shambles and see some twenty oxen or a hundred sheep, killed, flayed, cut up, and weighed to a pound, for the three regiments.

⁴⁰¹ Woods, p. 85.

⁴⁰² *Sessional Papers*, vol. 24, “Third Report from the Select Committee on the Army before Sebastopol, 1854-55”, p. 34.

⁴⁰³ Woods, p. 87

Oh, the flies! the stench! Every ounce of meat and other stores I had to account for with the utmost minuteness.⁴⁰⁴

Had sixty-one Arabas loaded, and two hundred and four horses, and after the usual accidents of carts breaking down, loads tumbling off, etc., and lazy Turks, got off at nine o'clock... At twelve o'clock reached the encampment, 'Gevrekli.'... A most disastrous march, which but for the inefficiency of the guide, whom I took care myself to see into the right road, might have been well managed.⁴⁰⁵

The British army followed Ottoman customs for procurement. Most of its contractors were unreliable.

The persons who supplied the army with fresh provisions were men notoriously unfitted for their posts, and, in addition to their incapacity, were not possessed of one-tenth of the capital requisite for buying up the rations. One of these parties, and the principal one, was a tailor who had been bankrupt at Smyrna only a few months previously. No contracts had been made with these individuals for the supply of anything but bread, and even that I was told was informal and worthless. Barley, straw, meat, and wood were furnished merely upon a verbal promise of payment at some future period.⁴⁰⁶

All the biscuit and forage and nearly all the stores in Varna containing tents, soldiers' clothing, and various field equipment were destroyed in a fire on 10 August. The fire and subsequent chaos were described clearly by a British commissariat officer:

I was suddenly interrupted yesterday by one of my Turkish dragoons, who had escorted twenty-six carts into Varna yesterday morning, rushing into my tent to report that Varna was burnt down, all the Commissariat stores destroyed, and his twenty-six carts irrecoverably lost in the confusion. This was startling indeed. We certainly had seen a fire the night before in the direction of Varna, but had no idea of its extent... On my arrival I found the town, with the exception of a small portion in which fortunately was situated the Commissariat Office and Treasure, a smouldering heap of ruins, the only buildings standing being a solitary mosque tower, a gateway, and the French powder magazine. The escape of the latter seems to have been most extraordinary and providential. Round it on every side were burning ruins, and the very walls were hot with the flames that had encircled it... Our treasure was put into carts, and sent off into the fields; and the whole population of

⁴⁰⁴ *Some Records of the Life of Stevenson Arthur Blackwood* (London, 1896), p. 47.

⁴⁰⁵ *Some Records of the Life of Stevenson Arthur Blackwood*, p. 56.

⁴⁰⁶ Woods, p. 87.

French and English, soldiers and sailors, Turks and Greeks, made a rush to the gates of the town... Everybody was drunk; champagne was running in rivers. The part burnt happened to be just that where all the shops were from which one occasionally drew one's supplies of bacon, sherry, porter, and such like necessaries; and those houses that were not gutted by the fire were instantly ransacked by the French Zouaves, who with a praiseworthy anxiety to secure what could be saved, ate and drank everything on the spot.⁴⁰⁷

The choice of campaign locations in Varna was unsatisfactory for the British army. Devna was an unhealthy place, revealing a new feature of the campaign that became terribly prominent. In late July, cholera broke out at Varna, and hospitals were filled with cases within a few days. The epidemic was associated with the rivers and lakes linking the camps of Devna, Aladin and Varna. Severe disease spread quickly at the new encampment site at Gevreköy. Conditions at the camp at Varna, which had remained the site of the Third Division of the British army since its arrival from Gelibolu in late June, spread infection to several regiments of the division. Yüksekova occupied by the regiments of the Second Division also played a role in spreading disease. Blake draws a gloomy picture of the British medical services:

At the front the soldier, sleeping in wet trenches, with no dry clothes and no flooer to his tent when out of the front line, was fed on tiny rations of uncooked food, accompanied by coffee madewith green beans, which could not be roasted. With no firewood to warm himself or his food, with his clothes worn out, he became an easy victim to dysentery, scurvy or cholera.⁴⁰⁸

From 19 September 1854 to 28 September 1855, 188 officers and 1755 soldiers in the British army were killed. During the same period, 51 officers and 1548 soldiers died from wounds, 35 officers, and 4244 soldiers died from cholera, and 26 officers, and 11425 soldiers died from other causes by the end of December 1855. Between December and the end of March, 322 soldiers died of wounds and diseases,

⁴⁰⁷ *Some Records of the Life of Stevenson Arthur Blackwood*, p. 59.

⁴⁰⁸ Blake, p. 111.

bringing the total deaths to 270 officers and 19,314 men. In addition to these casualties, 2,873 soldiers died of exposure to cold temperatures, bringing the total number of deaths to 22,457. French casualties in the field or hospitals in the East during the campaign totaled 63,000, of which 31,000 occurred in the Crimea and 32,000 in Istanbul. In February, 19,648 soldiers in the Crimea were ill, of whom 2,400 died, 1,993 recovered, and 8,738 were sent to Istanbul. Istanbul hospitals treated 20,088 ill soldiers, of whom 2,527 died.⁴⁰⁹

In Gelibolu, a 300-bed hospital located a kilometer from the city met the French army's basic needs. The initial hospital barracks was established upon the shores of the Dardanelles near the route of the fleets in May 1854. From 1854 to 1856, nineteen French hospitals were established at Istanbul in four different types of buildings: permanent barracks, Ottoman hospitals, palaces, and wooden barracks (i.e., Pera; Dolmabahçe; Military School; Parade Ground; Gülhane; University; Davud Pasha; Maltepe; Rami Çiftlik barrack hospital; field hospitals in tents at Princess Islands, Kanlıca, Yenibahçe, Maslak; the Russian Embassy; and Sisters of Charity). Hospitals in Istanbul were protected from the dangers of war and sufficiently near the Crimea for easy communication. The fleet, responsible for supplying the army with necessities, also assisted in transporting the wounded and sick soldiers from the Crimea to Istanbul. Many of the casualties could never have recovered in the Crimea.

It was at once decided that a hospital for 1200 ailing soldiers should be established in a part of this magnificent barrack. However, subsequent events rendered Adrianople less important as a military point. A small naval hospital was established in Izmir.

⁴⁰⁹ Baudens, p. 174.

The first French hospital established at Istanbul was in Maltepe, and it continued to be used constantly until 31 May 1856. The central pharmaceutical department, entrusted to supply medical services in the Crimea and Istanbul, was established on the coast near Beşiktaş. Hospitals at Constantinople were insufficient to accommodate increasing numbers of patients with fevers. Only the hospital at Pera treated 27,500 soldiers during the twenty-two months of its existence. After the Malakov Bastion was captured, the hospital received 800 ill soldiers in one day, 595 of whom were severely wounded Russian prisoners.⁴¹⁰ In the spring of 1855, it was decided that wounded French and Russian officers would be lodged in the ambassador's house. When a peace treaty was signed, the French government expended large sums to refurbish the palace.

On 14 September 1854, the three allied fleets met no resistance when they disembarked on Crimean soil at Gözleve. The arriving force included 137 cannon and 61,200 troops, including 27,000 each French and British troops and 6,000 Turks.

4.4.4. Russian Logistics

Russian troops traditionally quartered in the Ottoman territories during wars against their southern neighbors. The Russians then attempted to meet supply needs through the local population, but they also brought many materials from their homeland. The Russians established their stores and hospitals in the Principalities. When the Russian army passed over the Pruth River, three months of supplies had already been prepared.

⁴¹⁰ L. Baudens, , *On Military and Camp Hospitals and the Health of Troops in the Field*, translated by Franklin Hough (New York, 1862), p. 144.

According to Petrov, the Russian army supplied their troops based on voluntary trade with the local population because the Russians were not fighting a war in the summer of 1853. Materials were purchased from the local population using receipts, and the Russian Quartermaster would later reimburse suppliers. Relations between the Wallachians and Russians deteriorated because suppliers were not paid adequately or on time for the products they had provided.

Russian logistics were based on the idea that the war would soon end and the Russian army would remain in the Principalities. General Zatler, responsible for Russian logistics in the Balkans, described the details of the Russian preparations in his book. In the Principalities, Russia planned to rent 4880 carts from villagers (each with two oxens). The cart drivers would be paid daily. The Russians established magazines and hospitals in many cities of the Principalities.⁴¹¹ The diet of the Russian soldier differed from the agricultural products of the local population in the Principalities, which was a significant handicap for the Russian supply system and the health of the soldiers.⁴¹²

4.4.5. Conclusion

British and Russian armies, dissatisfied with their commissariats during the war, established investigations to determine who was responsible for ineffective supply and health systems. British Commissioner General Filder and his Russian equivalent Zatler defended their acts and precautions after the war. Many people blamed them for the armies' miseries. The French were better prepared for war than

⁴¹¹ Fedor Zatler, *Zapiski o prodovolstvii voisk v voennoe vremya*, vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1860), pp. 192-220.

⁴¹² Petrov, vol. I, pp. 89.

their allies. The British had rushed into action almost totally unprepared. Transportation and health services failed when they first arrived in the East. They had no effective medical staff, and their commissariat was inexperienced and undermanned. All tasks were completed on an ad hoc basis. As one author remarked, “Lord Raglan had a splendid collection of soldiers; but he could not have marched them fifty miles.”⁴¹³

⁴¹³ Cassell’s *Illustrated History of England 1820-1861*, vol. IV (London, 1864), p. 176.

CHAPTER V

AT THE FRONT:

WAR ON THE DANUBE

Considering the bulk of the literature, one may think that the battles in the Crimean War have been thoroughly discussed. However, many fights of the Crimean War, including those on the Danubian front, have been insufficiently explored. Even more unfortunate, most historical studies on the Crimean War provided one-sided explanations that depend only or heavily on sources from one participant country. British historians have concentrated on English sources, whereas Russian have largely utilized only Russian materials. This method of history writing has obviously hindered sufficient understanding of military strategies and tactics of rivaling armies and assessments of the outcomes of battles. Military reports cannot be viewed as texts of solid facts; they are political expressions of battles/fights and possess an inherent agenda of propagating successes and underrating failures. In the reports from the front, the numbers of enemy forces have been exaggerated, whereas the successes of the opponent have typically been underemphasized. Military reports are useful only when they are compared with the enemy's reports and the remarks of other observers. This chapter presents a discussion of the fights on the Danube

through a critical observation using different archival materials and secondary sources. This approach represents the only way to understand what actually occurred on the Danube in 1853 and 1854.

5.1. War Plans and Strategies

5.1.1 First Stage: The Russo-Ottoman War

The nature of provisions and the allocation of troops along the Danube indicated that this war would largely be a defensive war for the Ottomans.⁴¹⁴ The allocation of forces changed during the war, but the Ottomans did not want to concentrate their forces to give an open field battle. The Ottoman armed forces devoted all their energy to the defense of the entrenched positions on the Danube and in Bulgaria. The Ottoman defense was largely based on the triangle amidst the first-class fortresses of Varna, Silistre and Rusçuk and the fortified camp of Şumnu — the headquarters of the Ottoman army. These structures were the backbone of the Ottoman defense and were known as Quadrilateral or *Kila-i Erbaa*. In July 1853, Ömer Lütfi Pasha reported that half of the Ottoman forces would be devoted to the fortifications and fortresses along and behind the Danube, and the other half would be used as a mobile army stationed at Şumnu.⁴¹⁵ According to this strategy, if Russia assaulted Vidin or attempted to pass the Quadrilateral, then the allocated forces could easily be summoned to lend a hand to any defense line where necessary. At the commencement of the war, Ömer Lütfi Pasha enjoyed a force of 40,000-45,000 men in his headquarters at Şumnu while the remainder of his forces were allocated to the

⁴¹⁴ *Govone memoires*, p. 35.

⁴¹⁵ ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 3/1, 27 Ramazan 1269 [4 July 1853].

many fortresses either on the passes in the Balkan range or on the Danube River.

Some forces also remained in Edirne and Sofia as reserves.

In addition to Quadrilateral, Ömer Lütfi Pasha attached special importance to Vidin at the extreme left flank. During the war, the fortress of Vidin together with its *tête de pont* — the Kalafat fortification on the left bank of the river in Little Wallachia was the most important destination of the Ottoman army, only second to Şumnu. In the summer of 1853, the fortress of Silistre had only a humble force of approximately 6,000 men, but when the Russian threat over the fortress became real in the following year, the garrison would increase to 18,000 men. There were approximately 10,000-15,000 Ottoman troops in the fortress of Varna throughout the campaign. The fortress of Rusçuk hosted approximately 20,000 men and the Danubian fleet. Secondary fortresses in Dobruja (e.g., Tulça, Maçin, Babadağ, Hirsova) were defended by a total force of 20,000 men.⁴¹⁶

Place	Infantry	Cavalry	Commander
Vidin	10 battalions	1 regiment	Mehmed Sâlim Pasha
Atchar (?) Niğbolu Lezu (?)	6 battalions 8 battalions 6 battalions	4 squadrons 2 squadrons 2 squadrons	Çerkes İsmail Pasha, The vice president of the council of the Rumeli Army
Rahova	8 battalions	4 squadrons	Ahmed Pasha, Staff General of Ömer Pasha
Sistova Tırnova Lofça	16 battalions 2 battalions 4 battalions	1 regiment 1 regiment 1 squadron	Menemencioğlu Mustafa Pasha
Osmanpazarı Razgrad	6 battalions 4 battalions	3 squadrons 2 sq.	Ahmed Pasha
Rusçuk	10 battalions	4 squ	Mahmud Pasha, Brigadier General
Tutrakan	10 battalions	3 squ	Alyanak Mustafa

⁴¹⁶ According to Russian estimates the Ottoman forces were allocated as such: Şumnu 30,000; İsakçı 18,000; Karasu 14,000; Sistova 10,000; Hirsova 8,000; Rusçuk 15,000; Silistre 5,000; Rahova and Niğbolu each 4,000; Vidin about 20,000; Tutrakan, Maçin, Tulça, Varna, Plevne and Orsova about 16,000, and 5000 men as independent forces. Kovalevskii, pp. 72-73; Petrov, vol. I pp. 121-122. Kovalevskii claims that there were about 9,000 men in the fortress of Vidin.

			Pasha, Lieutenant General
Silistre	10 battalions	1 reg.	Musa Hulusi Pasha
Tulça Maçin Karasu Babadağ Hırsova			Hasan Hakkı Pasha, Müşir
Pravadi			Osman Pasha, Brigadier General
Şumnu	28 battalions	4 squadrons	Ömer Lütfi Pasha
Sofia	50 battalions	4 regiments	Rıfat Pasha and Rıza Pasha, Lieutenant Generals
Bosnia	32 battalions	2 regiments	
In total	175 battalions.	53 regiments	

The allocation of the Ottoman Forces in the Balkans in October 1853⁴¹⁷

The allocation of forces changed in time when necessary; however, the Ottoman army continued to be dispersed throughout a wide region. Dispersing the troops over a large territory was a distinctive feature of Ottoman warfare. Kovalevskii criticized the Ottomans because they were not able to stand fast against a decisive Russian attack with such scattered units.⁴¹⁸ However, the Ottomans never abandoned this strategy, despite its many disadvantages. Reid explains the Ottoman rationale:

Rather than concentrate armies to build greater force, Ottoman generals feared the loss of even a small territory to invasion or rebellion, and attempted to deploy forces everywhere to hold everything. Part of their problem was the factional strife in the officer corps and in the Ottoman government. Such factional conflicts made it difficult for a general staff to operate in unity and placed a commanding officer in jeopardy for failing to defend any part of the empire from loss.⁴¹⁹

Another reason for not assembling large armies was that the Ottomans did not think of determined offensives on the Russian army. The Ottoman army of the 19th

⁴¹⁷ The table is mainly derived from the information in Prim, p. 191.

⁴¹⁸ Kovalevskii, p. 73.

⁴¹⁹ Reid, p. 257.

century was powerful in the entrenched positions but lacked the capability for an offensive. (For details, see chapter 4.1.) Russell well summarized defensive skills of the Ottomans emphasizing the weakness in command in open battle:

Behind stone walls, intrenchments, or ramparts, defending a breach, or in the dash of a sortie, the Osmanli, with his wild courage, savage fanaticism, and disregard of death, which he considers indeed as his passport to Heaven, may repel the organized attack of European troops, or carry temporary destruction among their ranks; but no one who sees the slow, cautious, and confused evolutions of the Turks, their straggling advance and march, their shaky squares and wavering columns, can believe they could long stand against a regular army in the open field.⁴²⁰

Lieutenant-General Alyanak Mustafa Pasha, having entrenched at Tutrakan, was initially given the command of the forces at the center of the Danube. In 1854, he was assigned to the extreme right and served in Dobruja in Kel Hasan Hakkı Pasha's stead.⁴²¹ At the beginning of the war, Dobruja was under the command of Lieutenant-General Abdulhalim Pasha. Rusçuk, an important fortress on the Danube, was entrusted to Lieutenant-General Halid Pasha.⁴²² The first-class fortress at Vidin and its surroundings composed the Ottoman extreme left. During the preparations, the Ottoman units at Vidin were under the command of Lieutenant-General Çerkes İsmail Pasha. Lieutenant-General Nazır Ahmed Pasha and Lieutenant-General Mustafa Tevfik Paşa were also charged at this flank before the initiation of the hostilities. Three high commanders—of whom Ahmed Pasha was in the highest commanding position—in Kalafat showed the importance attached to this flank by Ömer Lütfi Pasha. According to a correspondent of *The Times*, Ahmed Pasha was the mind behind the forces at Kalafat, whereas İsmail Pasha was the energy behind the

⁴²⁰ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 102.

⁴²¹ ATASE, k. 5, d. 15, f. 9, 18 Rebîulahir 1270 [18 January 1854]; Czajkowski, *Moje wspomnienia o wojnie 1854 roku*, p. 36.

⁴²² Paton, p. 73; *Pictorial History of the Russian War*, p. 42; ATASE, k. 4, d. 10, f. 24.

action.⁴²³ Their relations were far from friendly, however. In the spring of 1854, Abdulhalim Pasha was assigned as the commander of the forces at Kalafat. Ahmed and İsmail Pashas were likely called back to Şumnu following the Russian invasion of Dobruja to assume command during the expected grand battle in case of the fall of Silistre.

A military strategy of defense on the Danube and offense in the Caucasus was hardly surprising, as it was typical for the Russo-Ottoman wars throughout the 19th century. However, Ömer Lütfi Pasha applied a strategy of limited offense on the Danube through which he aimed to raise the spirits of his troops without risking the Ottoman army. Thus, in contrast to other Russo-Ottoman encounters on the Danube, the Ottomans—not the Russians—had assumed somewhat of an offensive mindset in 1853. By the autumn of 1853, the Ottomans not only fortified some of the Danubian islands but also made preparations for building pontoon bridges. Without informing even his own commanders, Ömer Lütfi Pasha secretly investigated the quantity of lumber, boats, and ships in the region—necessary materials for pontoons on the Danube.⁴²⁴ Nevertheless, battles on this front would clearly demonstrate that the Ottoman assaults were not part of a grand military strategy.

Nicholas I had several alternative ideas for a campaign in the Ottoman Empire, (see, chapter 3.). However, he did not or could not implement his offensive plans. In 1853, the Russian government adopted a strategy of staying in the Principalities until a diplomatic solution could be found. The Russians entered the Principalities with the aim of strengthening their hands on the table of diplomacy. Thus, their only initial

⁴²³ *Der Russisch – türkische krieg in Europa 1853, bis zum März 1854* by a German staff officer (Kiel, 1854), p 77.

⁴²⁴ ATASE, Instructions of Ömer Pasha to Süleyman Bey, k. 4, d. 11, f. 11, 5 Muharrem 1270 [8 October 1853].

war plan was to protect the Principalities against any possible Ottoman assault. In the spring of 1854, when the Russian forces advanced, they were too late for a successful campaign directed at the Ottoman capital, as the opposing army had already been prepared to countermand the Russian advance, and notably, the international atmosphere was then completely unfavorable to the Russians. Interestingly, both antagonists on the Danube primarily adopted defensive strategies. Thus, military developments in the region could hardly solve the problems between the two empires, and it appeared that only mediations or interventions of the European powers could put an end to the crisis.

According to Kovalevskii, “Prince Gorchakov had an important but difficult task in guarding the enormous line of the Danube from Turno-Severin to the mouth of the Danube and to defend the vast region by forces inferior to the enemy.”⁴²⁵ Having invaded the vast territory of Wallachia and Moldavia, the Russians had difficulty maintaining the security of the army against possible attacks. In the autumn of 1853, the Russian forces in the Principalities were modest compared with the Ottoman army in Bulgaria. Russia dispatched only approximately 80,000 men, who constituted the Fourth Army and part of the Fifth.⁴²⁶ The number of Russian units was small for an invasion of the Principalities, let alone for any offensive toward Bulgaria. The Russian army did not even prepare necessary materials to cross the Danube River until the end of 1853, as St. Petersburg remained optimistic for a diplomatic solution.⁴²⁷ The imbalance between the Russian and Ottoman forces

⁴²⁵ Kovalevskii, p. 69.

⁴²⁶ For the order of battle of the Russian army, see the appendices of the following monographs: *Der russisch-türkische krieg*, p. 143-146, Petrov, vol. I, pp. 185-188; Bogdanovich, vol. I, *Prilozheniya*, pp. 6-15.

⁴²⁷ “Zapiski Gorchakova”, l. 69.

clearly demonstrated that the conquest plans of Istanbul—long discussed by the high command of the Russian army and Tsar Nicholas I—would not be implemented.⁴²⁸

In the summer of 1853, Russia clarified that the Russian army would possess the Principalities only as a “material guarantee” to force the Ottomans to yield to their “just demands.” In his reports to the Emperor, Prince Gorchakov praised the tactic of waiting in the Principalities and defending the positions against the Ottoman forces.⁴²⁹ However, after the war, Gorchakov harshly criticized this strategy in his diaries, claiming that the troops merely waited passively without conducting any meaningful action. Thus, he considered the wait-and-see policy applied during the invasion of the Principalities to be a grave mistake. According to Gorchakov, the most appropriate strategy would have been an actual offensive as early as 1852 by a coordinated operation of land and naval units. He expressed that declaring war would have been preferred over invading the Principalities. The Russian commander asserted that the invasion proved to be the least effective option.⁴³⁰ Gorchakov also accused Austria of betraying Russia. He believed that war could have been averted if Austria had shown sufficient support to Russia during the summer of 1853.⁴³¹

The Porte was aware of the Russian reluctance for war, but preparations were made for the worst possible contingency (*Rusya Devleti'nin yapacağı şeylerin en ağırını göze kestirerek*) and for prudence (*kaide-i ihtiyata riayeten*).⁴³² Ömer Lütfi Pasha rightly contemplated that the Russians would passively remain in the Principalities to wait for the result of the European diplomacy.⁴³³ According to the

⁴²⁸ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 63-64.

⁴²⁹ Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part 1, p. 91.

⁴³⁰ “Zapiski Gorchakova”, l. 49.

⁴³¹ “Zapiski Gorchakova”, l. 41.

⁴³² ATASE, k. 2, d. 7, f. 30, 14 Ramazan 1269 [21 June 1853]; ATASE, k. 9, d. 7, f. 11.

⁴³³ “...bunlar yalnız Memleketeyn'de durup ba'de yine politika ile icrâ-yi muamele ve müzakere edecekleri galip-i zann ...” ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 54.

Ottoman commander, the Russians only wanted to cause alarm in the Ottoman capital to attain their goals without resorting to an actual war. In his wartime correspondences, Ömer Lütfi Pasha confirmed Gorchakov's views. He argued that if Russia had sought a war in the summer of 1853, they would easily have advanced into the Balkans against the unprepared Ottoman forces. However, the Russian hesitancy to declare war furnished the Sublime Porte with the opportunity to organize its army on the Danube.⁴³⁴

The Russian army in the Principalities was commanded from Bucharest. The Fourth Army under the command of General P. A. Dannenberg was stationed in the Greater Wallachia between Bucharest and the Danube River.⁴³⁵ Some of these forces were stationed in Dobreni under the direct command of General Dannenberg, whereas Lieutenant-General Soymonov's forces were in Frateshti, and Major-General Pavlov's forces were in Budeshti. Subsequently, Soymonov's troops would be dispatched to Yergögü. Throughout the war, there were frequent fights between the Ottoman and Russian troops on the islands in front of Yergögü (i.e., Radoman, Mokan (Mokanoğlu) and Charoy). The last significant battle in the Balkans would also occur at Yergögü.

The Russian left wing extended from İbrail to Kili. Some forces of the Fifth Army were under the command of General A. N. Lüders. In the summer of 1853, the forces of Lüders were located in southern Bessarabia. Only some units, under the

⁴³⁴ "Saltanat-ı Seniyye'nin asla hazırda mukabele edecek kuvveti olmadığından ol vakt ne süretle tecâvüzzü murad etse icrâsına ferçeyâb olur idi fakat bazı sebeplere mebnî emr-i muharebede mütereddid iken Devlet-i Aliyye-i ebedü'd-devam vaktiyle ve âkulâne davranışarak buraca lâzım olan kuvve-i askeriyyesini politika ile imrâr olunan eyyâm içinde vakt ve zamanya yetişti." ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 8.

⁴³⁵ The west of the River Olt or Aluta was called Little Wallachia, and the east was called Greater Wallachia.

command of General Engelhardt, were located around İbrail and Kalas.⁴³⁶ There were frequent skirmishes between the Russian Cossacks and the Ottoman outposts. This region was principally important because of the intelligence activities of both parties. The lower Danube was also convenient to cross the Danube. In fact, as in previous Russo-Ottoman encounters, the Russian army would cross the lower Danube and invade Dobruja before its forward movement.

On the right wing, in Little Wallachia, the Russian forces were insignificant until the arrival of the Third Army. The extreme right of the Russian army was stationed near Karakul under the command of Lieutenant-General Fischbach. First Major-General Belgard and then Lieutenant-General Fischbach commanded the flying forces there.⁴³⁷ Subsequently, Adjutant-General Anrep-Elmpt would assume the command, enjoying larger forces against any possible Ottoman assault. In 1854, the Russian forces in Little Wallachia would be supported by the arrival of the 12th infantry division under the command of Lieutenant-General Liprandi.⁴³⁸

The major problem for the Russians was that they did not have a master plan. There were many ideas and tentative strategies, ranging from a *coup de main* to capture Istanbul to a simple diplomatic solution to save face. Some of these strategies were penned by Nicholas I himself, some by Prince Paskevich, and some by other top military figures. However, the acts and orders of the Emperor during the war were characterized by hesitancy.⁴³⁹ One Russian commander criticized the slowness and indecisiveness in the military action:

⁴³⁶ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 122-123.

⁴³⁷ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 86-87. The forces of Fischbach were composed of 7 battalions, 16 squadrons, and 3 Cossack hundreds. "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 58.

⁴³⁸ For the allocation of the Russian forces, see Kovalevskii, pp. 69-70.

⁴³⁹ "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 108.

Slowness in our military movements in the winter of 1853 and the summer of 1854 was not a result of a shortage in military forces but only resulted from the Russian indecisiveness. The Russians had in the Principalities and in the south of Bessarabia some 80,000 men and approximately 300 guns ready to act when the Ottomans confined themselves in fortresses and when they could no longer show up against our more than 10 thousand men.⁴⁴⁰

The Russian army failed to possess complete control in Little Wallachia throughout the war. The activities of the Ottoman forces in Kalafat and the reluctance of the local population to obey the Russian military government resulted in an ineffective Russian presence there. Actually, despite the Ottoman concerns, the Russian army could not pose a threat to the Serbian border.

After the declaration of war, both the Ottomans and the Russians were prudent in their actions, but interestingly, they perceived their opponent as more offensive than it actually was. The assembling of the Ottoman forces at Vidin and the occupation of Kalafat had defensive aims, but the Russians considered them to represent an aggression toward Little Wallachia and even toward Bucharest. Therefore, the Russians concentrated some of their forces in Little Wallachia, which was in turn understood by the Ottomans as preparation for an attack on Vidin to establish contacts with Serbia and Montenegro. Therefore, not surprisingly, the cautious and defensive moves of both parties were perceived by the rival army as a step toward an offensive.

In fact, there were no projects of the Ottoman military command as great as marching to Bucharest and ridding the Principalities of the Russian military presence. Certainly, any endeavors enduring some risk were borne from Ottoman strategic planning. At the beginning of the war, Serasker Pasha warned Ömer Lütfi

⁴⁴⁰ Ushakov, p. 68.

Pasha to be painstaking in each and every act.⁴⁴¹ Ömer Lütfi Pasha was also reminded that there was no other army to protect Istanbul.⁴⁴² The security of Istanbul was the priority; thus, any strategy that could damage the defense of the capital was to be disregarded. Thus, all ostensibly offensive actions of the Ottoman army had an underlying defensive motive. The capture of Kalafat was intended to prevent any possible ties between the Serbians and the Russian army. The capture of Olteniçe aimed only to misdirect the Russian army to facilitate the conclusion of the defensive works in Kalafat. Therefore, Ottoman military actions should be understood as an active defense aiming to urge the Russian withdrawal from the Principalities. Even during the siege of Silistre, Ömer Lütfi Pasha did not take the risk of battle but waited for the arrival of the Allied forces.

In 1854, when the Russians decided to cross the Danube River, the Third Army and more units from the Fifth Army accompanied by some forces from the Guards were transferred to the scene of the war. Thus, the Russian army in the Principalities and on the right bank of the Danube would reach significant numbers exceeding 150,000 men.

5.1.2 Second Stage: The Allied Campaign

When the Russians were gradually employing an offensive strategy, the war had already been transformed into a European war. This reality could have been expected to force the Russian army to act decisively and rapidly, but interestingly,

⁴⁴¹ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 29/1.

⁴⁴² “Rumeli Ordu-yu Hümâyûnu Devlet-i Aliyye’nin mecmu’-i kuvve-i mevcûdesi olarak bunun ne elde ve ne de hesap ve defterde bir kuvve-i ihtiyâtiyyesi dahi olmamâğıla” ATASE, k. 46, d. 1, f. 16, 21 Receb 1270 [19 April 1854].

the Russian command continued to act hesitantly. An allied war was not an easy and painless task for the Ottoman army. The Ottomans, both the commanders and members of the government, found themselves in a difficult environment in which they were expected to obey their European friends. Therefore, the Ottoman army would play only a secondary role following the French and British involvement in the war.

Command of the British was trusted to Fitzroy Somerset Lord Raglan and the French to Marshal Jacques Leroy de Saint-Arnaud, both experienced soldiers but not young and energetic. They were given command as a result of their careers, but their energy would not be sufficient to see the termination of the war. Saint-Arnaud passed away only a few weeks after the initiation of the Crimean campaign, and Lord Raglan passed away on 28 June 1855. General James Simpson would succeed Lord Raglan, and François Canrobert would assume command of the French army after Saint-Arnaud. On 16 May 1855, after Canrobert resigned from his post, Aimable Jean Jacques Pélissier was the commander of the French forces. After the fall of Sevastopol, Simpson retired from the Crimea, and the command was passed to General William John Codrington. Tactics and strategies altered along the changes in command. Nevertheless, for most of the allied campaign, there was only one significant target—the capitulation of the fortress of Sevastopol.

There were three armies fighting with the Russians (and four armies when the Sardinians participated in the alliance on 22 January 1855), but what was the hierarchy of command? Clearly, Ömer Lütfi Pasha was not the commander who would assume command of the allied armies. Lord Clarendon congratulated Ömer Lütfi Pasha for his patriotism to declare himself ready to serve under the allied

commanders for the good of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁴³ Certainly, the Ottoman commander-in-chief was not happy to be in a secondary position in a war that had been initiated under his own command. It was Saint-Arnaud who, as a result of a tacit agreement, would exercise the actual command. The number of French forces on the scene, which was far greater than the number of the British forces, naturally increased the power of Saint-Arnaud.

When France and Britain declared war on Russia, they had no plan but to protect and save the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The first months of the alliance passed without any lucid motive and objective. Although the Crimea was viewed as a target from the beginning of the Allied intervention, it became certain only in July 1854. Meanwhile, the preparations continued for months with a slow pace.

The naval powers thought that the Russian army would force both the Danube and the Balkans by their overwhelming force. Thus, these powers determined to secure a base of operations from which they could defend Istanbul, in case of the Ottoman retreat from the Balkans. Gelibolu, which was decided to be the base of defensive operations, would be the first destination of the allied troops. Sir John Burgoyne and Colonel Ardent had been sent to inspect this peninsula. As the allied troops began to arrive in March and April, they were employed in building entrenchments, known as the lines of Bolayır, and extending from the Gulf of Saros to the Sea of Marmora. When the allied forces were concentrating their powers, war had already accelerated in the Balkans. Russian troops crossed the Danube and laid a siege before Silistre. At that time, according to the common opinion, Silistre would not stand long against the Russian forces. The war strategy in May and June was to

⁴⁴³ Govone, p. 52.

wait for the advancing Russians and to repel them when they marched on Istanbul. At this time, the Russians were proceeding toward the outworks of Silistre. It was thought that the Russians would have established themselves in Silistre by the end of June and would be able (from Silistre) to act offensively against the Balkans. However, they were satisfied with the strength of Şumnu to repel the Russians with the help of the allied armies.

Three commanders-in-chief initially met at Varna to discuss the war affairs. The allied commander Marshal Saint-Arnaud and General Lord Raglan came to Varna together with *Serasker* Hasan Rıza Pasha. On 19 May, they held a war council during which Ömer Lütfi Pasha expressed his worries regarding the siege of Silistre. The Ottoman commander-in-chief informed them that there were 45,000 men in Şumnu, which could defend itself from the Russian forces. However, the fortress of Silistre, where there were 18,000 men could not hold the place longer than six weeks. The remainder of his forces were scattered in detachments. Ömer Lütfi Pasha suggested Varna as the point of concentration for the allies. The two generals agreed to bring up their troops to Varna. After the conference, Lord Raglan and Saint-Arnaud drove to Şumnu and inspected the troops and the field works to form the camp. The allied commanders considered that with an Ottoman force in Şumnu and an allied force in Varna, the Russians, even if they captured Silistre, would hesitate to advance into the Balkans with an enemy on each flank. Lord Raglan and Marshal Saint-Arnaud returned to Istanbul on 23 May.

At the request of the Ottoman commander-in-chief, an English division landed at Varna early in June. With the Russians being checked in their rapid advance, the line of the Balkans might now be held and the fortresses of Şumnu and Varna

covered if the enemy should turn on them after taking Silistre, which was still considered doomed to fall despite being resolutely defended. The remainder of the British army, including the greater part of the brigade remaining in Gelibolu, followed the Light Division to Varna, and was distributed on the heights south of Varna bay and at various points on and near the Sumnu road, Devna, Aladyn, and Manastır—places that, although surrounded by landscapes picturesquely grand, will long live drearily in the remembrance of the British army in the Ottoman Empire. However, while the allied forces were gradually assembling there, the Ottomans stopped the Russian army, and the lines of Bolayır thus became obsolete soon. In retrospect, it can be concluded the fear of Russian power was exaggerated (see, Chapter 4.4.).

The Allies wanted to push back the Russian advance in Bulgaria, but they did not plan an advance into the Principalities and Bessarabia.⁴⁴⁴ The military strategy of the allied powers would be based on an offense that could soon end the war. After the abandonment of the siege of Silistre, the previously long discussed target of the military port of Sevastopol emerged as a certain and final war aim. This goal indicated that the theatre of hostilities would move from the Danube to the Crimean peninsula. On 18 July, the Allied War Council formally decided on a campaign in the Crimea.⁴⁴⁵ Although the allied powers formed their great designs for an offensive war at the beginning of their involvement in the war, they were not long in a position to execute them as they lacked an organized army. The Crimean expedition was thus initiated only in September 1854, as the Russians found time to prepare their defenses throughout the summer of 1854.

⁴⁴⁴ Hamley, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁵ Schroeder, p. 187.

5.2. First Encounters: The Ottoman Offensive

5.2.1. To Fight or Not to Fight

The Russian vanguard forces of 7,000 men (32 squadrons, 6 Cossack hundreds and 16 guns) under the command of Adjutant-General Graf Anrep-Elmpt crossed the Pruth River via Leovo on 3 July 1853. The first Russian forces would arrive at Bucharest by a forced march on 15 July. The main forces entered the Principalities in three columns and continued their movement in two columns after their arrival at Tekuch. On the right flank, 16 battalions and 48 guns under the command of Lieutenant-General Liprandi completed the crossing over the Pruth via Skuluani on 14 July and arrived at Bucharest on 24 July. In the middle column, the forces of 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ battalions, 80 guns, 7 Cossack hundreds and a pontoon park under the command of General Dannenberg crossed the Pruth via Skuluani on 3 - 15 July and arrived at Bucharest on 27 July. On the left, Lieutenant-General Graf Nirod crossed the river via Leovo with the forces of 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ battalions, 32 squadrons, 5 Cossack hundreds and 56 guns on 4 - 16 July. The invasion of the Principalities was thus complete in three weeks.⁴⁴⁶

General Gorchakov arrived at Jassy on 5 July and at Bucharest on 28 July. The invading forces were composed of the Russian 4th army, one brigade of the 5th army, the 5th light cavalry division and the 6th Cossack regiment. In July 1853, there were 71,869 Russian troops in the Principalities.⁴⁴⁷ Subsequently, in the summer of 1853, the forces would rise to 22 generals, 1,646 officers, 81,541 troopers and 5,741 non-

⁴⁴⁶ Bogdanovich, vol. I, pp. 99-100.

⁴⁴⁷ Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part 1, p. 86.

combatants.⁴⁴⁸ There were also local military forces in the Principalities, which would act under the command of the Russian invasion army. The *Granichari* (frontier guards) and *Drabantsy* (mounted militia) were totaled approximately 20,000 men with 14 guns. According to Gorchakov, these men were well trained but lacked “soldierly spirit”.⁴⁴⁹

The Russian forces were received cheerfully in both Jassy and Bucharest, particularly by the clergy. The best houses were given to the army commanders. Gorchakov wrote to Nicholas, “Forces of Your Highness were received in Bucharest as liberators”.⁴⁵⁰ The Russian proclamation to the inhabitants of the Principalities declared that fundamental rights would be untouched and that local people would be able to occupy their own business under the protection of the Tsar. There would not be any additional tax or conscription, and materials taken would be paid according to a fixed price determined by the local authorities.⁴⁵¹ Obviously, the language of the proclamation was gentle. However, the reality was different. The control of the Principalities passed into Russian hands, while the civil government was under the total control of the Russian army. In November 1853, Stirbey and Ghika, the Wallachian and Moldavian princes, abandoned their positions and countries. The Russians entrusted governance to General Budberg, who would be on the post until the invasion of Bucharest by the Ottoman and Austrian forces in the autumn of 1854. Martial law was in force, although it was not officially declared. The Wallachian vessels were forbidden from navigating in the Danube. The Wallachian landowners

⁴⁴⁸ Tarle, vol. I, p. 264.

⁴⁴⁹ Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part 1, p. 88.

⁴⁵⁰ Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part 1, p. 93.

⁴⁵¹ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 84-85.

and farmers were forced to deliver necessary articles to the Russian army, and in case of refusal, the Russians were authorized to employ force.⁴⁵²

General Gorchakov placed a greater portion of his forces near Bucharest with vanguard forces on the River Arjis and waited for a diplomatic solution. There were also four surveillance forces: at Kalas, against Silistre, against Rusçuk, and on the borders of Little Wallachia. The Cossack and Wallachian posts conducted reconnaissance on the Danube River. The borders of Bessarabia from Reni to the banks of the Danube were protected by the forces of General Lüders composed of 16 battalions and 8 Cossack hundreds. The Russian army and the Danubian flotilla had to watch all the lower and central parts of the Danube and to protect the Principalities, avoiding any conflict with the Ottoman forces.

St. Petersburg considered that the invasion of the Principalities would be sufficient to enforce the Porte to accept Russia's "just demands." In one of his reports from Odessa, Prince Menshikov claimed that the Ottoman Empire, lacking both financial and military resources, would collapse even without any hostile step from the Russian Empire. The Russian intelligence also indicated that the Porte was unprepared for war. All the forces in European Turkey included 70,000 men, and only 18,000 of them could be assembled in Bulgaria and on the banks of the Danube River. The fortresses were in poorer conditions, and were not furnished with necessary supplies and military provisions. While the European diplomacy attempted to solve the Russo-Ottoman conflict, the Porte took measures for a possible war. Provisions and armaments were feverishly prepared, and fortifications were repaired and strengthened (see, chapter 4.4.).

⁴⁵² *The Times*, 14 November 1853, p. 7.

The Russian invasion of the Principalities was not perceived as a *casus belli* by the Porte and the European powers. However, Russia's passage to the right bank of the Danube River or movement over the Caucasian boundaries would result in immediate commencement of war. Therefore, both sides contented themselves with firing on boats sailing in the Danube or on the pickets erected along the Danube. Neither the Ottomans nor the Russians wanted to accept the responsibility for officially initiating the hostilities. Orders were sent to the borders not to fire before the enemy. Admiral Slade and many others found such orders illogical:

The Capitan Pasha concluded the interview by giving Mushaver Pasha a written order to abstain from firing first in case of meeting the enemy. "Are we not at war?" asked the latter. "We are," he replied; "but such is the Porte's order." Mushaver Pasha excused himself from undertaking to comply with it, since the first broadside from a ship in position might decide an action. "That is your affair," replied the chief. "I have given you the order and that suffices me."⁴⁵³

The obscurity in the mind of the Russian soldiers in their pickets on the Danube was likely deeper than that of their enemies. The Russian soldiers could not understand why they could not pass the Danube River.⁴⁵⁴ In case of an attack from the other bank of the river, the Russians were ordered not to retaliate but only to defend their positions. Thus, hostilities opened reluctantly, with minor fights on the Russian pickets along the Danube. The first fight occurred during the night from 22 to 23 October when a small Ottoman detachment crossed the river from Tutrakan and killed a Cossack at Olteniçe. On 23 October, a small Egyptian detachment also made its way to the right bank of the river at Hirsova and killed some Cossacks. However, the first significant fight occurred on 27 October: it was a skirmish between the

⁴⁵³ Slade, p. 132.

⁴⁵⁴ Petrov, vol. I, p. 131.

Ottoman fortification at İsakçı and two Russian steamers that were attempting to pass to the upper Danube. On the same day, another battle occurred on the Caucasus front, after which the Ottoman army captured the Russian fortified town of Şekvetil (St. Nicholas) on the Caucasian border. These events marked the first acts of war, but in the Crimean War literature, there remains some controversy regarding the commencement of the Crimean War; thus, it is appropriate to discuss here how the hostilities began.

On 4 October, the Ottoman Grand Council decided on war against Russia, and on 8 October, Ömer Lütfi Pasha sent an ultimatum to General Gorchakov asking for the evacuation of the Principalities. On the same day, the Şumnu garrison paraded together, swore fidelity to the Sultan, and listened to the *Ferman* declaring war on Russia.⁴⁵⁵ After the oath, the commanders read the order of the day to their men.

To The Imperial Soldiers!

When we fight our enemy, be always firm and courageous on the field of battle! Never basely turn your back to him: but, to avenge ourselves, we will sacrifice both our bodies and souls. This is the Koran!! We have sworn to this,— on the Koran! You are all Mussulmans, and I have not the slightest doubt, but that you are prepared to sacrifice yourselves in defence of your religion and of the Throne. But, should there be among you, one, who has a dread of war, let him say so! Fear, is a sickness of the heart. It would be highly dangerous for us to present ourselves before the enemy, with such men in our ranks, whom we could employ elsewhere, in the hospitals, and in other services. But whosoever, after this, runs away from the battle field,— let him know that he will be shot. On the other hand, let those brave men, who devote themselves in defence of their religion and of the empire, remain firm at their post; —that they may unite their hearts to God;—that they may love their religion;—that they may prove themselves brave; and God will, without doubt, give them the victory!

Soldiers! Purify your hearts; and then put entire confidence in God. Fight; and sacrifice yourselves as your ancestors have done;—and remember, that the country and the religion which they confided to your charge, you are bound to transmit, entire, to your children.

You know that the object of our present life is to serve God worthily, and the Sultan; and, by these means, to gain Heaven.

⁴⁵⁵ Temperley, p. 364; Rhodes, pp. 92-94.

Soldiers! Every man of honour ought thus to think, and act according to these sentiments. So may God assist you,
Amen.⁴⁵⁶

The Ottomans set fifteen days as a time frame for a positive answer after the letter was handed to Gorchakov. The letter underlined that a negative reply would naturally initiate hostilities.

While the Sublime Porte has exhausted all means of conciliation to maintain at once peace and its own independence, the Court of Russia has not ceased to raise difficulties in the way of any such settlement, and has ended with the violation of treaties—invading the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, integral parts of the Ottoman Empire. True to its pacific system, the Porte, instead of exercising its right to make reprisals, confined itself even then to protesting, and did not deviate from the way that might lead to an arrangement. Russia, on the contrary, far from evincing corresponding sentiments, has ended by rejecting the proposals recommended by the august mediating Courts—proposals which were alike necessary to the honour and to the security of the Porte. There only remains for the latter the indispensable necessity of war. But, as the invasion of the Principalities, and the violation of treaties which have attended it, are the veritable causes of war, the Sublime Porte, as a last expression of its pacific sentiments [*efkâr-i muslihânesinin asâr-i hayriyyesi*], proposes to your Excellency, by my intervention, the evacuation of the two provinces, and grants for your decision a term of 15 days, to date from the receipt of this letter. If within this interval a negative answer shall reach me from your Excellency, the commencement of hostilities will be the natural consequence.⁴⁵⁷

The letter was received by General Gorchakov on 9 October and was answered the following day. The Russian commander-in-chief replied that he had no authority to enter any bargaining to evacuate the Principalities.⁴⁵⁸ In his own words, “On 27 September [9 October], I received Omer Pasha’s letter in which he requested the evacuation of Moldavia and Wallachia, with notification that hostilities shall otherwise begin on 11 [23] October. I replied him that I have no authority either to negotiate or to evacuate the Danubian Principalities. The Emperor approved the

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁵⁷ *The Annual Register*, pp. 293-294; ATASE, Ömer Pasha to General Gorchakov, k. 4, d. 11, f. 61; *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Kırım Savaşı (1853-1856)*, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁵⁸ For Gorchakov’s reply, see *Aktenstücke*, p. 192.

answer and entrusted me with the duty to repel the Turkish attacks without crossing to the right bank of the Danube.”⁴⁵⁹ When should the hostilities begin: on the very same day of the arrival of the Russian answer, fifteen days after the dispatch of Ömer Lütfî Pasha’s letter or fifteen days after the arrival of the Russian answer? Gorchakov claims that the Ottomans initiated hostilities earlier than the termination of the given period. According to the Russian commander, hostilities should only be initiated on 24 October, as he received the letter on 9 October. This claim shows the official Russian view, and Russian historiography repeated the argument that the Ottomans did not wait until the expiration of the given period.

However, the date when Gorchakov replied to the Ottoman ultimatum can also be viewed as the legitimate initiation of hostilities. According to Badem, the war officially began when Gorchakov’s letter arrived. In any case, there was no Ottoman document claiming 9 October as the official commencement of war. The Porte preferred to wait until the end of fifteen days after the dispatch of letter, which would have been 23 October. Temperley argued that Reşid Pasha received Gorchakov’s dispatch on 18 October and declared it as “the beginning of war”. He further stated that on the following day, Redcliffe learned that “instructions had been sent to Ömer Lütfî Pasha to begin hostilities without delay”. By the night of 21 October or the morning of 22 October, Ömer Lütfî Pasha would have received the orders from Reşid Pasha to initiate hostilities.⁴⁶⁰ Meanwhile, upon pressure from the Western powers, the Porte extended the duration for another week.⁴⁶¹ This letter, which was sent to Ömer Pasha on 19 November, identified a new deadline if the hostilities had not already been initiated. The Porte also warned Ömer Pasha to wait for the new

⁴⁵⁹ “Zapiski Gorchakova”, p. 57.

⁴⁶⁰ Temperley, p. 365.

⁴⁶¹ “harekât-ı hasmânenin bir müddet-i cüziyye için te’hiri lâzım geldiğinden... evvelki müddet üzerine daha yedi gün ilâvesiyle şehr-i cârînin yirmi yedinci Pazar gününe deðin” ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 29.

instructions before opening hostilities.⁴⁶² The new deadline was Sunday, 30 October. Therefore, it is clear that the Ottomans considered the previous deadline to be 23 October rather than 9 or 24 October. However, the message arrived eleven hours after the commencement of hostilities.⁴⁶³ Redcliffe argued that Ömer Pasha initiated the hostilities although he had already received the order to suspend hostilities. However, the letter arrived at Varna on 22 October and at Şumnu only the following day. Therefore, it was impossible for Ömer Pasha to suspend the hostilities on the Danube, which had already been decided. As such, hostilities were initiated on the night of 22 to 23 October. Ömer Pasha obviously did not want to lose time to initiate hostilities.⁴⁶⁴

5.2.2. First Fights

The Ottoman forces crossed the Danube with small forces of 20-40 men to attack the Russian positions. At Tutrakan, a small unit crossed the river and killed a Cossack.⁴⁶⁵ Some Egyptian soldiers also landed on the left bank of the river Danube at Boğazköy to attack a Cossack picket and killed a few Cossacks.⁴⁶⁶ The first serious encounter occurred on the following day between an Ottoman battery placed on an island before İsakçı and the Russian light fleet, which was composed of two steamers (the *Prut* and the *Ordinarets*) and eight gunboats under the command of

⁴⁶² “bir gûne harekât-ı hasmâneye baslanmamış ise bi ’t-tehîr andan sonra ırsâl buyurulacak talîmât-ı cedîdeye intizâr olunması” ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 29, 21 Muârem 1270 [24 October 1853].

⁴⁶³ Same document.

⁴⁶⁴ Temperley, p. 365.

⁴⁶⁵ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 129, 131; *Sobranie Donesenii*, “Izvestiya iz pridunaiskikh knyazhestv”, 22 October 1853 [3 November 1853], p. 22. Mustafa Pasha and Ömer Pasha claimed that four Cossack were killed and one Cossack was captured. ATASE, Mustafa Pasha to Ömer Pasha, k. 4, d. 11, f. 26, 19 Muârem 1270 [22 October 1853].

⁴⁶⁶ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 29.

Captain Varpakhovskii destined to Kalas from İsmail.⁴⁶⁷ At 8 o'clock in the morning, when the steamers approached İsakçı, the Ottoman battery began to fire.

According to the Russian sources, their losses were insignificant, although the attempt was a complete success. A total of 14 men, including Varpahovskii, the commander of the fleet, were killed, and 60 men were wounded.⁴⁶⁸ The Ottomans, however, reported severe damage inflicted on boats and steamers. Their estimates of the Russian losses varied, but were much higher than the Russian accounts.⁴⁶⁹ Actually, both sides exaggerated the casualties on the ranks of the enemy after each and every battle on the Danube.

Ömer Pasha believed in the necessity to conquer strategic points on the left bank of the river before the arrival of the Russian Third Army, after which he contemplated that any attack on the Russian positions would be much more difficult.⁴⁷⁰ The Ottoman attacks on the Danube were primarily arranged to prevent any probable Russian strategy over Serbia. Ömer Pasha explained his plan as follows: "...because the prevention of such a Russian design and practice is the most important task ... without neglecting already prepared precautions and without haste ... [we will] attempt fake offensives along the Danube and two real ones where the Russians are weak and cross the river by means of bridges..."⁴⁷¹ Ömer Pasha also

⁴⁶⁷ For a report of the Dobruja Christians regarding the consequences of the battle of İsakçı, which was aimed to be given to the Russian Colonel at Sünne (Sulina) and their trials for this act, see ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 43.

⁴⁶⁸ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5461; Petrov, vol. I, pp. 128-130.

⁴⁶⁹ Report of İsmail Bey at Maçın, k. 4, d. 11, f. 11/1, 10 Safer 1270 [12 November 1853]. According to hearsay, the number of killed men should be 95 or 180 men.

⁴⁷⁰ "... üçüncü ordusu yetişmeksizin karşı yakada bir yer tutulup istihkâmât verilmesi haylice menfaati müeddî olacağı ve eğerçi daha bir az vakt geçirilir de ber-vech-i muharrer karşısında bir yer tutulamaz ise Rusyalu sevâhil-i Tuna'ya haylidен hayli metânet verip bu ise mazarrat-ı külliyyeyi mücev ve sonra tecâvüz maddesinde enva'-ı müşkilâti câlib bir sey iken..." ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 29.

⁴⁷¹ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 8.

considered the moral effect of offensive actions against the Russians upon the Ottoman army.⁴⁷²

The Porte feared a sudden Russian attack, Russian contact with Serbia and Montenegro, and subsequent provocations for a popular revolt. Therefore, the Ottomans gradually increased the number of their forces at Vidin and surroundings.⁴⁷³ Ömer Pasha did not want to rely solely on the Vidin fortress and ordered his troops to fortify the island in front of the fortress and to capture the town of Kalafat on the left bank of the river. As early as the summer of 1853, the possible entrenchment of the island, which was then underwater, was under discussion. It was also declared that, if necessary, a letter could be sent to General Gorchakov to explain the necessity of the fortification for the security of the Ottoman fortress.⁴⁷⁴ However, on 15 October, when the war was then imminent, the Ottoman units under the command of Mehmed Sâlim Pasha, the military governor of Vidin, commenced the reinforcement of the island without any communication with the Russian General. On the night of 15 to 16 October, 300 men landed under the command of Hüseyin Pasha, and on the following day, there were approximately 2,000 men who entrenched themselves on the island. Meanwhile, there were also intensified preparations in the Vidin fortress to cross the Danube to the left bank. Referring to the Ottoman invasion of the Kalafat Island, Petrov argued that the Ottoman hostilities began without any formal declaration of war.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² Petrov, vol.I, p. 131.

⁴⁷³ ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 44/1, 23 Şevval 1269 [30 July 1853]; k. 3, d. 9, f. 39, 26 Zilhicce 1269 [30 September 1853]; k. 4, d. 11, f. 6, 29 Zilhicce 1269 [3 October 1853].

⁴⁷⁴ ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 4 and 4/1.

⁴⁷⁵ Zayonchkovskii claims that on 15 October, the irregulars attempted to land with no success. Zayonchkovskii, vol. II, part 1, p. 149; Petrov, vol. I, p. 128.

On 27 October, Lieutenant-General Çerkes İsmail Pasha arrived at the island and prepared the Ottoman forces for an attack over Kalafat. . Early in the morning on the following day, 10,000 Ottoman soldiers under the command of İsmail Pasha seized and fortified the town. The Ottoman cavalry was dispatched to the neighboring villages, and a bridge was erected between Kalafat and the island.⁴⁷⁶ According to Paton, a British journalist who visited Kalafat only a few weeks after its capture, the town became “one of the most remarkable fortified camps in modern times.”⁴⁷⁷ Vast material resources of Little Wallachia were then under the service of the Ottoman army, which would otherwise be used by the enemy. Over time, the Russian forces in Little Wallachia significantly increased, but until the first days of 1854, there was not any serious encounter in this flank.

5.2.3. The Battle of Olteniçe, 4 November 1853

The Ottoman intelligence in Wallachia, however, convinced the Ottomans that the Russians would assault Kalafat soon. Ömer Pasha, having calculated that he was too distant to help Kalafat, projected an assault on Olteniçe to misdirect the plans of the Russian headquarters.⁴⁷⁸ Through this approach, he aimed to gain some time to strengthen the entrenchments at Kalafat. All the preparations were performed with top secrecy. On 31 October, a battalion and approximately two hundred rifles along with four guns were dispatched by means of small boats to the island opposite of Tutrakan. The troops under the command of Halid Pasha commenced the erection

⁴⁷⁶ Petrov, vol. I, p. 132; Hüseyin Hüsnü, *Saika-i Zafer* (Istanbul), pp. 95-97.

⁴⁷⁷ Paton, p. 33.

⁴⁷⁸ See, for example, Serasker Pasha to Ömer Pasha, k. 4, d. 11, f. 55/1; Hüseyin Hüsnü, p. 120.

of a battery on the island.⁴⁷⁹ On 1 November, Lieutenant-General Mustafa Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman forces at Tutrakan, landed at the island and entrenched it. A corps, which had concealed itself from the enemy owing to the fog, had also been assembled at Tutrakan under the command of Ömer Lütfi Pasha.⁴⁸⁰ The Ottoman forces were highly careful not to disclose the operation in any way to the Russian spies. Batteries were established in both the island and the town of Tutrakan. Powerful guns were located in strategic positions commanding the Wallachian banks of the Danube.

The quarantine at Olteniçe was a well-built stone-work. On 2 November, Lieutenant-Colonel Kütahyalı Hüseyin Bey, with two infantry battalions, three pieces of cannon and 100 mounted police, captured it with the help of the artillery fire from the right bank of the river.⁴⁸¹ This quarantine was strengthened, and approximately 8,000 men were immediately located there. Ömer Lütfi Pasha's report was informative about the capture of Olteniçe.

Without loss of time, 400 workmen, under the direction of staff-officers, commenced raising fortifications, for which purpose 2000 gabions had been already prepared. On the 3rd, again other troops were sent to fortify the position. As soon as the Imperial troops had landed on the left bank of the river, the Russians, quartered in a large village, at about an hour's distance, turned round and began to retreat. A body of cavalry was despatched to reconnoitre, and having encountered at Oltenitza an outpost of Cossack cavalry, they killed five, and rejoined our lines with a loss of three men. We found at Touzla, on the left bank, a great quantity of boats, which we sent to Turtukai. The number of boats at our disposal having facilitated the construction of the bridge, we were enabled without delay to place in the fortifications twelve large guns which were brought from Shumla. On the 3rd, at 4 P.M., three battalions of Russian infantry, with eight cannon, a regiment of cavalry, and a party of Cossacks, entered the village of Oltenitza. Our troops, posted within the works constructed on the left bank, waited them

⁴⁷⁹ Rhodes, pp. 103-104.

⁴⁸⁰ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 135-137.

⁴⁸¹ Ömer Lütfi Pasha's report was quoted in many contemporary books. Dodd, pp. 37-38; Chesney, p. 341; *The Annual Register*, p. 299. According to Rhodes, who was one of the observers of the battle, three infantry battalions, five rifle companies, and 80 irregular cavalry captured the quarantine. Rhodes, p. 104; According to Hüseyin Hüsnü, there were one infantry battalion, one artillery company and 6 guns. Hüseyin Hüsnü, pp. 121-128.

firmly. This same night I caused to be constructed a bridge at the confluence of the Arjish with the Danube, and flanked it with redoubts. Yesterday, 4th November, at six A.M., we began to perceive the movement of the Russian forces. As soon as their march was well defined, I caused to be embarked and carried to the lazaretto a reinforcement of one battalion. The evening before, I had placed on a level piece of ground a battery of guns calculated to face any attack which might be made.⁴⁸²

Gorchakov estimated that the Ottoman forces between Rusçuk and Tutrakan included approximately 40,000 men. The concentration of enemy troops not far from Bucharest caused Gorchakov to panic, and he ordered General Dannenberg, the commander of the Fourth Army, to drive back the Ottomans.⁴⁸³ The Russian forces, which were composed of a brigade (eight battalions), six squadrons of Uhlans, three Cossack hundreds and two batteries under the command of Major-General Prokofii Yakovlevich Pavlov, commander of the 11th infantry division, assaulted Olteniçe on Friday, 4 November.⁴⁸⁴ The engagement started at dawn of that day and lasted four hours. The attacks were repeated three times despite the powerful Ottoman cannony from both the right bank of the river and the island. Ömer Lütfi Pasha provided a summary of the fight:

They advanced, supported by the fire of their artillery; and at the same time two battalions, with two guns, came on threatening our left flank. Having commenced the assault, another stronger division consisting of six battalions, with four guns, and having in the rear three regiments of cavalry supporting and outstripping their left flank took its position, and formed in two lines, with artillery, horse and foot, into echelons, attacking our right flank. After an exchange of a few shots, the centre gave the assault, whereon they charged both our wings. The centre attacked three different times, and each with a fresh battalion, twice on the left and once on the right. A well-directed fire from our fortress at Turtukai soon dispersed their right column; and the centre gradually fell back, after having suffered severely, and half its number hors

⁴⁸² *The Annual Register*, p. 299.

⁴⁸³ "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 60.

⁴⁸⁴ *Sbornik izvestii*, p. 26. According to Ömer Pasha, the Russian force was composed of 20 infantry battalions, 3 regiments of cavalry, and one Cossack regiment with 32 guns. BOA İ.HR, 114/5554-1, 8 Safer 1270.

de combat. The battery of the island, also, mounted with powerful guns, menzil top, and commanded by Khalid Pacha, did admirable execution on the enemy's right wing. The Russians advanced with coolness and resolution almost to the brink of the trench, and on this account their loss was considerable, amounting to 1000 men killed, and double the number wounded. The engagement lasted four hours from noon till four P. M.; and during this interval, the wagons never ceased to carry off their dead; and twenty were observed heavily laden even after the conflict. With a view of facilitating this duty, as long as it lasted, we abstained from molesting the enemy, and from firing a shot; but found, nevertheless, 800 dead bodies on the field. A private carriage, moreover, was remarked, and from the pains taken in the search, we conjecture it must have been destined to receive the body of a general officer. At five P.M., a total confusion ensued in the Russian ranks; their lines were completely broken, and their retreat precipitate. An hour later, some few rallied in the neighbouring villages, but the remainder fled in disorder. Some of our men pushed forward in pursuit of them beyond the lines, but were summoned back by trumpet to their own quarters. Our loss amounted to 106 men. We found on the field of battle 500 muskets, sacs, cartridge-boxes, equipments, etc.⁴⁸⁵

The Ottoman accounts regarding the statistics of the battle were highly different from the Russian accounts. Ömer Lütfi Pasha reported that the Russian losses were one thousand killed and two thousand wounded, while the Ottoman losses were only 106 men.⁴⁸⁶ A fresh news from the front stated that the Russian losses were, 153 killed and 655 wounded.⁴⁸⁷ According to later and more reliable numbers, the Russian losses included 236 men killed, including 5 officers, and 734 wounded including 39 officers.⁴⁸⁸ Ömer Lütfi Pasha stated that the Ottoman cannonry halted to allow the Russians to carry their casualties. The Russian sources claimed that this ceasefire occurred only because of the exhaustion of the Ottoman cartridge. Although the Russians advanced almost to the brink of the trench, General Dannenberg, who watched the fight from New Olteniçe, ordered the Russian forces to retreat. He thought that even if the attack were successful, the position could not

⁴⁸⁵ *The Annual Register*, pp. 299-300.

⁴⁸⁶ Petrov, vol. I, p. 145; Dodd, p. 38; ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 51/1, 16 Safer 1270; Hüseyin Hüsnü inflated the Russian losses to 4, 800, *Saika-i Zafer*, pp. 120-134.

⁴⁸⁷ *Sobranie donezenii*, "Izvestiya s Dunaya", 5 November 1853 [17 November 1853], pp. 26-27.

⁴⁸⁸ RGVIA VUA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5461.

be maintained in possession because of the strength of the Ottoman cannonry. According to Petrov, the order of retreat came only when the Russian forces would defeat the enemy.⁴⁸⁹ This battle was also likely the reason for the failure of General Dannenberg to assume a key command position during the Crimean campaign.

The Russian intelligence from Istanbul provided information indicating that Hasan Pasha and Mustafa Pasha, the Ottoman commanders at Olteniçe, were killed during the battle.⁴⁹⁰ However, this information was incorrect. In fact, Mustafa Pasha was not killed, and Hasan Pasha did not participate in the encounter. Several participants in the battle were soon promoted. Among them, Kütahyalı Hüseyin Bey, who was wounded from his hand and who would subsequently be known as *Parmaksız* (Fingerless), was promoted to Colonel.

After this battle on account of an Ottoman offensive toward Bucharest, the Russian forces in İbrail and Bessarabia were transported to Greater Wallachia and were concentrated between Budeshti and Negoeshti to thwart any Ottoman advance.⁴⁹¹ However, Ömer Lütfi Pasha considered that the mission was already accomplished and directed his forces to retreat to the left bank of the river on 12 November. The Ottomans let fire the Olteniçe quarantine and the bridge on the Arjis River. The island was evacuated on 16 November and in the following day Ömer Lütfi Pasha with his staff left Tutrakan for Şumnu.⁴⁹² Kalafat was already fortified, and the forces at Olteniçe were hardly in a position to defend against a powerful Russian attack. However, some forces remained at the island before Tutrakan. Paton's conclusions for the battle of Olteniçe were likely attained in a conversation

⁴⁸⁹ Petrov, vol. I, p. 144.

⁴⁹⁰ *Sobranie donezenii*, “Izvestiya s Dunaya”, 25 November 1853 [7 December 1853], pp. 31.

⁴⁹¹ Petrov, vol. I, p. 147.

⁴⁹² Rhodes, p. 113.

with Ömer Lütfi Pasha: "... in this action the design of Omer Pasha was to give elbow room to Ismael Pasha at Kalafat: to distract and confuse the Russians about the real point at which a push was to be made, and at the same time to give confidence to his own troops; in all which he was fully successful."⁴⁹³

Gorchakov did not believe that the affair at Olteniçe was simply a part of the Ottoman military planning. He claimed that the Ottoman forces had already invaded Kalafat two weeks ago and that there were no Russian forces with the exception of some cavalries and that that there was no such tactical operation over Olteniçe. Ömer Lütfi Pasha was only propagating his command and the power of his army. To justify his retreat, "he publicized his attempt on Oltenitza as a diversion of our attention from Little Wallachia, thereby having the opportunity to strengthen Kalafat."⁴⁹⁴ The Russian command explained this retreat with the concentration of the Russian forces around Olteniçe and the effect of the Russian attack on 4 November, after which the Ottomans understood the difficulty of an offensive against Bucharest. This retreat was portrayed as recognition of the Russian strength in the Greater Wallachia by the Ottoman high command.⁴⁹⁵ "This retreat was a sign for the effect on them [the Ottomans] of the battle of 23 October [4 November]".⁴⁹⁶ In another encounter, the Russians repelled an Ottoman attempt to cross the Danube in front of Rusçuk. Although the Ottomans reported that it was merely a fake attempt to misdirect the Russian forces, the Russians did not buy this explanation and reported that they managed to repel an Ottoman offensive.

⁴⁹³ Paton, p. 82.

⁴⁹⁴ "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 61-62.

⁴⁹⁵ "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 61-62; Petrov, vol. I, p. 149.

⁴⁹⁶ *Sbornik izvestii*, p. 27.

Reports of the entrance of the Ottoman forces in Bucharest circulated in the European cities after the battle of Olteniçe.⁴⁹⁷ Many people thought that the real target of the Ottoman army was the capital of Wallachia, and they even considered it highly possible. For instance, Dodd claimed that only the heavy rains prevented the Ottoman army from pursuing the Russians from Olteniçe toward Bucharest.⁴⁹⁸ Obviously, the same battle was understood quite differently in different circles. The lack of information and the subjectivity here played a role. During the war, official or unofficial reports from the front not only aimed to inform the government and the people but were also part of the internal and international propaganda.

During November and December, several minor fights occurred on the Danube; some around the islands in front of Yergögü and Rusçuk, some in Little Wallachia, and some on the Lower Danube, especially on and around the Byndo Island. These events marked the only exchange of fires between the pickets and between the cavalries, especially the Russian Cossacks, who were observing the activities of the enemy and conducting reconnaissance activities. The next serious encounter occurred on 6 January 1854 in a village in Little Wallachia, which is not far from Kalafat.

Although several scenarios were discussed in Russia for a popular revolution in the Balkans, throughout the war, these theories were not put into practice, likely because of the desire to preserve good relations with Austria. Thus, many of the Russian students of the Crimean War believed that the friendship of Austria cost them heavily.⁴⁹⁹ However, the Ottoman presence at Vidin and Kalafat with such a strong force always troubled the Russians on account of a possible attack through

⁴⁹⁷ *Constitutionel* quoted in *The Times*, 14 November 1853, p. 7.

⁴⁹⁸ Dodd, p. 38.

⁴⁹⁹ Petrov, vol. II, p. 21.

Little Wallachia.⁵⁰⁰ Gorchakov noted that in late November, the Ottoman forces in Vidin increased to 25,000 men. Kalafat became a real fortress in time. In one of his reports, Ömer Lütfi Pasha explained the defensive capacity of the town in detail. According to the report, there were ten infantry battalions, including rifles amounting to 5,600 men, seven cavalry companies, approximately 400 mounted police and approximately 500 irregular cavalry with 28 guns. Six battalions of infantry, three batteries, and one cavalry regiment were also ready at the Vidin port to cross the river if necessary. Moreover, approximately 1,000 irregulars were recently prepared and were to be sent to Kalafat. Having claimed that the fortifications of Kalafat could only be captured by a force of 50,000 men, Ömer Lütfi Pasha added his hope for the realization of such a Russian attack.⁵⁰¹ This correspondence not only shows the confidence of the Ottoman commander-in-chief with respect to his forces but clearly demonstrates the concern of Istanbul for the security of Kalafat and Vidin. This letter calmed and pleased both the Ottoman government and Sultan Abdülmecid.⁵⁰²

5.2.4. The Battle of Çatana, 6 January 1854

Shortly after the new year began, Kalafat was again informed of a possible Russian assault. According to the Ottoman intelligence, 25,000 men from Bucharest united with another 10,000 men in Karayova [Craiova] and entered the neighboring villages of Kalafat.⁵⁰³ Although the Russian forces were not as numerous as the Ottomans believed they were, the Russians considerably increased their forces in

⁵⁰⁰ Petrov, vol. I, pp. 153-154.

⁵⁰¹ "... doğrusu Rusyalunun bu gelişini bayağı arzu ederiz." ATASE, k. 4, d. 12, f. 13, 11 Rebiulevvel 1270 [12 December 1853]; See also, ATASE, Ahmed Pasha to Ömer Pasha, k. 46, d. 1, f. 1/2, 14 Rebiulevvel 1270 [15 December 1853].

⁵⁰² ATASE, k. 4, d. 12, f. 13/2, 23 Rebiulevvel 1270 [24 December 1853]; k. 4, d. 12, f. 13/3.

⁵⁰³ ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 12

Little Wallachia by the arrival of the 12th division under the command of Liprandi. The command of the Little Wallachian forces also changed hands and was entrusted to Graf Anrep-Elmpt. According to Ahmed Pasha, such a Russian presence in Little Wallachia would at least result in the isolation of the Ottoman units from the local population. In fact, the increase in forces was actually portrayed in the Russian literature only as a measure against the local population, who were then prone to a revolt, rather than as preparation to drive the Ottomans from Kalafat.⁵⁰⁴ In December, villagers from a few places, such as Salchiya and Kushmir, revolted against the Russian military governance. The Russian army wanted to suppress the local population by sending additional forces to the region.⁵⁰⁵ Gorchakov claimed that he had no plan to invest in and capture Kalafat but that his only aim was to prevent the Ottoman activities in Little Wallachia. He believed that it would be difficult to capture Kalafat but even more troublesome to defend it.⁵⁰⁶

On 31 December, the Ottoman forces attacked the Russian positions at Çatana; however, it was not a decisive attempt, and the forces soon retreated. This attack most likely was an attempt to assess the strength of the enemy. The real assault would be realized during the Russian Christmas on 6 January 1854. The plan was initially a coordinated attack on a few villages in three groups. However, the reconnaissance activities showed that the Russians were more powerful than previously envisaged, and only Çatana was targeted by the Ottoman units.⁵⁰⁷

Actually, the Russians were caught unprepared because such a significant Ottoman offensive under the harsh conditions of winter was rare in the Russo-

⁵⁰⁴ Petrov, vol. I , pp. 157-159.

⁵⁰⁵ In January and February 1854, the Russian forces continued to attempt to suppress the revolts of both the local population and the local militia, *drabantsy*.

⁵⁰⁶ "Zapiski Gorchakova", l. 66.

⁵⁰⁷ ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 13, 8 Rebiulahir 1270 [8 January 1854]

Ottoman wars.⁵⁰⁸ The attackers were composed of thirteen battalions of infantry, three regiments of cavalry, 300 mounted police and 28 guns. Detaching some forces at Maglavit and Gunya as a reserve, the Ottomans arrived at Çatana on 6 January 1854. Although their forces were not ten times smaller than the Ottoman forces, as Petrov claimed, the Russians in Çatana were undoubtedly inferior to their enemy, comprising only three battalions under the command of Colonel A. K. Baumgarten.⁵⁰⁹ İsmail Pasha, with six battalions of infantry, seven rifle companies, two regiments of cavalry, 300 mounted police, and twelve guns, assaulted the Russian position. Ahmed Pasha waited outside of the village with five battalions of infantry, one regiment of cavalry and ten guns to prevent any assistance. After İsmail Pasha was wounded, Mustafa Tevfik Pasha assumed command. After six hours of battle, Major-General Belgard and Major-General Jigmont arrived at the scene with nine battalions of infantry, one battalion of rifle, two regiments of cavalry and sixteen guns. Ahmed Pasha prevented this Russian force from entering the village, and, after a battle of one and a half hours, forced them to retreat. According to Petrov, these new forces only aimed to save Baumgarten's units, and when they retired, the target was already realized. After the battle, the Ottoman troops returned to Kalafat.

The Ottomans reported the Russian losses in the thousands. Ahmed Pasha, the commander of the operation, reported that more than 2,500 Russians were killed and that the number of wounded should be approximately twice that number.⁵¹⁰ A few days later, more confident about the numbers, he then claimed that 4,000 Russians were killed and that such a number was wounded. He added that

⁵⁰⁸ Petrov, vol. I, p. 162.

⁵⁰⁹ The Ottomans believed that the Russian forces at Çatana included four infantry battalions, one rifle and two hussar companies, four Cossack hundreds and six guns.

⁵¹⁰ ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 13, 8 Rebiulahir 1270 [8 January 1854].

Baumgarten, the Russian commander at Çatana, was greatly wounded and had recently died.⁵¹¹ In fact, Baumgarten was easily wounded during the battle. According to the Russian sources, their losses comprised 835 men killed, including 22 officers, and 1,190 men wounded, including 32 officers. The Russians estimated the Ottoman losses at approximately 3,000 men.⁵¹² The rival armies may have been more reliable about their own losses, whereas their estimates of the enemy casualties tended to be exaggerated. Although the official numbers are conflicting and unreliable, the encounter was undoubtedly one of the bloodiest of the Crimean War.

The difference in the official reports was also reflected in the monographs. The numbers of the losses and the strength of the warring parties notably differ in the literature. For example, Tarle claimed that the Russians had to confront an enemy that was twice as large and even three times larger in the battles of Olteniçe, Çatana and Yergöğü.⁵¹³ Similarly, there is an imbalance between the Russian and Ottoman forces in the Turkish sources. Therefore, it is necessary to find a balanced picture by examining the data conveyed by the warring parties.

In this battle, two hundred Russians who were captured during the battle were killed by the Ottoman soldiers. The Ottoman commanders defended themselves by claiming that they could not stop the soldiers because of their anger resulting from the battle of Sinop, in which thousands of Ottoman soldiers fell. *Seraskerlik* stated that this action constituted an unacceptable act of war and should not be repeated.⁵¹⁴ After the battle, reinforcements were sent to Kalafat as a precaution for a possible

⁵¹¹ ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 20, 13 Rebiulahir 1270 [13 January 1854].

⁵¹² Petrov, vol. I, p. 175.

⁵¹³ Tarle, vol. I, p. 287.

⁵¹⁴ "... ancak bu hareket fi'l-hakika nâ-meşrû ve haddizatında muzırr şey olduğundan ve mukaddemki tenbihâtin dahi mugayiri bulunduğuundan fîmaba'd bu misillü hal ve hareket vukua getirilmemesi hususunun bi't-tekrar ilân ve tekidi..." ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 5, 29 Rebiulahir 1270 [29 January 1854].

Russian attack.⁵¹⁵ Those participants of the battle who showed bravery were generously awarded with orders, swords and other gifts on both sides.⁵¹⁶

5.3. Siliștre: The Ottoman Defensive

5.3.1. Introduction

All the battles thus far explained were surprise Ottoman attacks. In the first phase of the war, the Russians, who waited for a diplomatic solution, adopted a defensive strategy. The crossing over the Danube by the Russian forces might provoke a war not only with the Ottoman Empire but also with Britain and France. Thus, for a more aggressive strategy, the Russians at least needed the German powers on their side. However, after the battle of Sinop, when an allied campaign against Russia proved to be a real possibility, the European diplomacy further weakened. At this juncture, despite the failure to obtain the support of the German powers, Nicholas I ordered the Russian army to move forward as far as possible into the Ottoman Balkans before the British and French forces arrived at the war theatre. The Russian offensive was initiated in 1854. Despite the Tsar's orders and encouragements, the Russian troops continued to act slowly and hesitantly on the Danubian front. While the Russians were advancing, the resolute Ottoman defense endeavored to stop them. However, this effort differed from the previous encounters, as the European powers gradually took the side of the Ottomans, and the war was transformed into a European war.

⁵¹⁵ ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 20/2, 17 Rebiulahir 1270 [17 January 1854].

⁵¹⁶ ATASE, k. 5, d. 14, f. 20/1; Petrov, vol. I, p. 176.

When it became clear that the war would not end soon, the Emperor reinforced his army, increasing its strength by up to 150,000 men, with an immense force of cavalry and more than 500 guns. According to the plan of operations, the Russian forces would be concentrated in the opposite bank of Selistre while holding the Ottomans in check at Kalafat. Accordingly, some forces would remain in Dobruja, while the main body would cross the Danube from Kalaraş and join the troops coming from the lower Danube around Selistre. In 1854, the Russians' first target was the Ottoman fortress of Selistre, which was twice occupied by the Russian army, in 1810 and in 1829. However, the rest of the strategy was rather unclear and would take shape based on the course of events. Certainly, holding the fortress of Selistre was a necessity for the Russian army to operate in Bulgaria. Selistre would serve as a base for advance operations and as a link with the rear of the army. Without such a foothold, the Russians could not manage their logistic operations on the right bank of the Danube River. After the fall of Selistre, the Russians would either capture or mask Varna and would force Şumnu to pass through the Balkans upon the plains of Rumelia.

5.3.2. The Passage of the Russian Army over the Danube

During the first months of 1854, the Russian forces implemented their plans for passage to the right bank of the river. The passage would be realized through Dobruja as in the previous Russo-Ottoman encounters on the Danube. However, while some of the Russian forces were attempting to control the Dobruja region, others aimed to control the rear of the Russian army. The first Russian troops on the right bank of the Danube were those who entered into Dobruja; however, as these

forces proceeded to the fortress of Silistre and provided the security of a safe passage, the main forces would cross the river in front of Silistre. Therefore, the Russians aimed to capture the islands before Rusçuk and Silistre to control all forms of movements through the river and to provide security for the Russian army.

General Lüders invaded the island of Byndo. The Russian troops passed over the Danube and drove the Ottomans out of the fortified positions in the Dobruja region. Between 20 March and 2 April, the entire peninsula was cleared of the Ottoman forces, while General Lüders had concentrated his troops on Babadağ. Three days later, the Ottomans were driven from Karasu (Chernavoda), and Mustafa Pasha, retreating toward Varna, left free passage for the enemy. Thus, the Russians passed the river with complete success, although they moved slowly. However, the region that they entered was a malicious area, and they had lost many men in Dobruja from malaria, want of water, and a defective commissariat. Although command of the right bank in Dobruja was obtained, the army emerged shaken in its morale. Meanwhile, some forces were dispatched to Olteniçe and Yergöğü. Under the command of Schilder, the Russians captured the islands in front of Yergöğü and inflicted serious damage on the Ottoman fleet in Rusçuk after a bombardment on 9-15 February.⁵¹⁷ Russian forces were also assembled in Kalaraş, opposite the fortress of Silistre.

On 5 March 1854, Knyaz Paskevich was assigned as the commander-in-chief of the Russian army on the Danube.⁵¹⁸ Paskevich was pessimistic about a Russian offensive. First, he considered that the line of operations was too extensive and that his right flank was too distant from his center near Bucharest. He observed two

⁵¹⁷ For details of the operation, see *Sbornik izvestii*, no. 47 “News from the Danube 16 [28] February 1854”, p. 70.

⁵¹⁸ GARF, f. 728, op. 1, d. 2237.

dangers that menaced his rear and right flank: the Austrians in the Carpathians, and the Ottomans at Kalafat. The British and French armies approaching the Ottoman land constituted another problem hindering a successful campaign in the Ottoman Balkans. These threats to the Russian army would lead him to exhibit indecisiveness in his every command. Thus, despite all his previous successful campaigns against the Ottoman and Persian armies, Paskevich would play a negative role for the Russian army in 1854. In his letters, the Tsar always urged his favorite commander to act rapidly and added his confidence in his army to capitulate the fortress. Paskevich, however, was reluctant in all his actions. First, he left the front under the pretext of being wounded, and then convinced the Tsar to raise the siege.

On 10 May, the Ottomans occupied Karayova. The Russian columns assumed a defensive position behind the Aluta. General Dannenberg commanded this right wing, with Generals Liprandi and Soymonov under him. The right wing of the Russian army would then simply aim to prevent the Kalafat army from attempting to interfere with the siege of Silistre. The remainder of the Russian army on the left bank was at Yergögü, at Olteniçe, and at Kalaraş; on the right bank, two divisions were in the Dobruja, and the corps of General Lüders was marching up the right bank of the Danube to join in the offensive movement against Silistre.

5.3.3. The Siege of Silistre

The Russians crossed the Danube River in three columns on 23 March 1854, and it was only halfway through May when the fortress of Silistre was besieged. The Russians moved slowly, but they were successful in bringing a large army to the right bank of the river. The fortress could not stand against such a formidable army

without waging an open battle. Thus, all observers considered the fall of Silistre to be unavoidable, but the discussion turned around how long the fortress could resist.

Ömer Lütfi Pasha thought that Varna could be defended by naval force, but Silistre should necessarily be devoted to a knowledgeable and able commandant.⁵¹⁹ After the outbreak of the war, the fortress was entrusted to Musa Hulûsi Pasha, the director general of the Ottoman Arsenal (*Reis-i Meclis-i Tophane-i Âmire*).⁵²⁰ He actually prepared most of the defense works on the Danube in the summer of 1853.⁵²¹ Grach Pasha, a Prussian, was his right-hand man in Silistre. Therefore, the siege of Silistre could also be portrayed as a struggle between two German engineers: Grach Pasha (Friedrich Grach) and General Karl A. Schilder, the famous Russian commander who was responsible for the siege activities. Schilder was optimistic about the fall of the fortress. In Menkov's words, "he promised everyone that the fortress would soon fall."⁵²² Grach Pasha was also criticized, as Schilder was. Captain Butler, a British officer in Silistre, stated that Grach Pasha wanted to abandon the Arab Tabya at the beginning of the siege, but the redoubt would be famous as the backbone of the defense of Silistre.

The Russian army before Silistre was composed of 77 battalions, 68 squadrons, 27 Cossack hundreds and 266 guns. By the end of the siege, the Russian forces increased to as many as 90,000 men. According to General Schilder, there were only

⁵¹⁹ "...Sulistre kalesi ise düşmana en yakın mevki bulunmasıyla daha ziyâde itinâya şayân ve bu cihetle mevkî-i mezbûrda dirayet ve malûmâtlı bir kumandar bulunmasına lütûm-i kâvi olacağı zâhir ve nümayân bulunduğuna binaen leffen takdim kilinan bir kita pusula mûcibince Tophâne-i Âmire Meclisi Reisi saadetlû Musa Paşa hazretleri bendelerinin zîkr olunan Silistre mevkîine..." ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 8, 27 Ramazan 1269 [23 June 1853].

⁵²⁰ "Mousa Pasha ... was a short firmly knit man of great bodily strength, dark complexioned, pale and round faced, with an agreeable expression of countenance, and seemed about forty years of age. He had a great deal of conversation - a rapid consumption of ideas, as well as great natural elegance of expression; - in fact his high flown Turkish sometimes got fairly beyond me. - All this was unlike a Turk, and when I was informed that he was of Jewish extraction it occasioned me no surprise." Paton, p. 85

⁵²¹ ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 32, 13 Şevval 1269 [20 July 1853].

⁵²² *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 215.

7-8 thousand regular forces in Silistre.⁵²³ The Ottoman forces, wrote Petrov, were not more than 12,000, an important portion of whom were irregulars.⁵²⁴ The Russian observations were generally correct. At the beginning of the invasion of the Principalities, there were only six battalions of infantry at Silistre, which was sufficient at that time according to Musa Pasha. He asked only for some cavalry and a company of artillerymen.⁵²⁵ Over time, the Ottoman forces at Siliste gradually increased. Ömer Pasha described the Ottoman forces as consisting of ten battalions of infantry, a sapper regiment (four companies), two rifle companies, three hundred mounted police, and four companies of cavalry, and he added that two battalions and eight hundred irregular cavalry were also sent because the battalions in the fortress were not in full formation. There was also a significant number of irregulars before the fortress amounted to 10,000 men under the command of Giridizâde Mehmed Pasha for the reconnaissance activities. In addition, the Ottoman Cossacks would serve before Silistre. In another letter, Ömer Pasha estimated the forces in the fortress as consisting of 15,000 infantrymen and 3,000 cavalrymen, who enjoyed a sufficient amount of ammunition and provisions. According to the Ottoman commander-in-chief these forces were sufficient for the defense of Silistre.⁵²⁶ On 19 May 1854, Ömer Lütfî Pasha informed Saint-Arnaud and Lord Raglan about the Ottoman forces: he claimed that there were 18 thousand in Silistre, 45 thousand in Şumnu, 26,000 in Varna, 15,000 in the garrisons along Danube, and a total of 104,000 men.⁵²⁷

⁵²³ Petrov, vol. II, p. 134.

⁵²⁴ Ibid, p. 139.

⁵²⁵ ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 13/1,

⁵²⁶ BOA İ.DH, 299/18911.

⁵²⁷ Bogdanovich, vol. II, *Prilozheniya*, pp. 65-66, footnote 32.

After his visit to the Turkish camp at Şumnu, Saint-Arnaud observed that the Ottoman forces were poorly armed and dressed and, even worse, without shoes but generally competent in the war and maneuvering well. Horses were small but strong. The artillery could be regarded as the best part of the army. Its health services were by far the worst; doctors and drugs were highly insufficient.⁵²⁸

Before the siege, the first target for the Russians was to gain possession of the islands below the fortress of Siliștre. To facilitate this objective, they brought a flotilla of gunboats from Kalas and under their protection constructed bridges from the left bank to the islands and from the islands to the right bank. Despite the opposition of the Ottoman outposts and the gunfire from the fortress, the Russians were masters of the river by the end of April. The Russians then threw up batteries on the islands, and having secured the bridge, the forces moved to the right bank of the river to conduct the siege operations. Approximately 30,000 men who passed over the bridge from Kalaraş joined with 40,000 men coming from Rassova under Lüders. On 13 April, the Russian forces invaded the islands before Siliștre fortress, i.e., Çiplakada (Naked Island) and Hopa. The pontoon bridge between the Çiplakada and the left bank of the Danube was completed on 24-26 April and to the right bank on 16 May. The forces under the command of General Lüders arrived in front of Siliștre on 16 May. On this very day, the first skirmishes occurred between the Ottoman and Russian forces. The next day, preparatory activities for the siege were conducted. While the Russians conducted reconnaissance activities, defenders attacked the Russian lines from the Arab Tabya. During the siege, such attacks were regularly repeated to prevent the trench and mine works of the enemy (20 and 25 May; 3, 10, 14 and 15 June).

⁵²⁸ Bogdanovich, vol. II, p. 135.

While the Russians were preparing to invest in the fortress of Silistre, the allied forces concentrated their troops in Gelibolu and Istanbul. Meanwhile, the Austrian government ordered mobilization of the army. At such a juncture, Nicholas I wanted his forces to advance as far as possible, and to force the European powers to attain an honorary peace. However, his forces were slow. Nicholas I could not understand the reason for the slowness, and he sent several letters to Marshal Paskevich to act more rapidly. Not all Russian commanders were as pessimistic as Paskevich. In April 1854, Lüders wrote to the War Minister that after the advance of the Russian army to Silistre, the fortress would soon be surrendered as a result of their fear of the Russian army.⁵²⁹ As early as September 1853, General Lüders claimed that it was possible to capture the main walls of Silistre in 14 days.⁵³⁰

On 17 May, General Schilders, who was on the scene when the fortress of Silistre was captured by General Diebitsch in 1829, then assumed command of the siege operations. Therefore, he was well aware of the strong and weak points of the fortress. Although Silistre was a small fortress, the outer works placed it into such an extensive field that only a large army would suffice to perform the siege operations. In this case, however, the siege was never transformed into a proper blockade. The Russians assaulted the fortress only from one side. Some regions were only partially patrolled by the Russian cavalry, and the Ottomans were thus able to obtain strategic assistance from the outside throughout the siege. “The investment was so imperfect that General Cannon, an Englishman in the service of the Port, contrived to pass between the Russian covering armies, and enter the place, to the great joy of the

⁵²⁹ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5443, l. 61.

⁵³⁰ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5447, l. 1-2.

besieged.”⁵³¹ Throughout the siege, the Ottoman garrison continued to enjoy its connection with the Ottoman army in Şumnu.

The defense primarily relied on several bastions surrounding the fortress. In the summer of 1853, Silistre was by no means in a situation to defend itself.⁵³² However, until the initiation of the siege, several redoubts were completed. In 1829, the fortress fell as a result of the Russian assault from the south. Now, there was a stone fort called Mecidiye Tabya, as well as earthen forts, Arab Tabya and Yılanlı Tabya.⁵³³ At the beginning of the siege in the Arab Tabya, the first line of defense, there were three Egyptian battalions and 6 guns under the command of Miralay Mustafa Bey.⁵³⁴ Over time, this force increased to approximately 3,000 men with Albanian and Anatolian irregulars, and they would be commanded by Mirliva Kütahyalı Hüseyin Pasha, the hero of Olteniçe.⁵³⁵

Before the siege, considering the outer fortifications, Musa Pasha confidently claimed that “the Russian may come when they choose, we are ready for them, - thanks to Prussian science”.⁵³⁶ However, during the siege, in all his letters Musa Pasha underlined the necessity of outside assistance, without which the fortress could not stand long. On 21 May, he claimed that the Russians numbered 60,000 and that their number was constantly rising. Silistre could not resist against such a formidable force without relief from the army stationed at Şumnu. Having underlined that this siege was more alarming than the previous sieges, Musa Pasha wanted a force of

⁵³¹ Cassell's *Illustrated History of England*, vol. IV, p. 173.

⁵³² Osman Bey was responsible for the defense works in Silistre. For his report on the defense of Silistre, see ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 7/7 [Copy, no date]; Ömer Pasha's reply, ATASE, k. 6, d. 18, f. 7/3, 21 Ramazan 1269 [17 June 1853] [Copy].

⁵³³ In the Russian sources, *Yılanlı* and *Değirmen* Tabya were confused. *Değirmen* was called *Yılanlı* (*Zmeinoe*), whereas while was called *Toprak* (*Peschanoe*). Bogdanovich, vol.II, *Prilozheniya*, pp. 11-12.

⁵³⁴ BOA İ.MMS, 1/30, 20 Şaban -2 Ramazan 1270 [18 May – 29 May 1854].

⁵³⁵ Namık Kemal, *Silistre Muhasarasi*, p 32.

⁵³⁶ Quoted in Paton, p. 85.

approximately 25,000 - 30,000 men to prevent the Russian siege operations. The next day, he repeated the necessity of assistance. In a reply, Ömer Pasha only stated the need for the assistance of the Allied powers and added that the forces under the command of Giridizâde Mehmed Pasha were sufficient to disturb the enemy. On 28 May, Ömer Pasha suggested that cavalries be sent from the fortress to impede Russian mine works and wanted the fortress stand fast until the arrival of the Allies. According to Ömer Pasha, the French and British forces would be ready to assist to the Ottoman war efforts in 20 days.⁵³⁷

General Schilder thought that the eastern front was the weakest side of the defense. Menkov harshly criticized Schilder's siege works. He claimed that there was no logic or aim in the siege works conducted by General Schilder.⁵³⁸ Paskevich, who was certain of the arrival of Ömer Pasha to relieve Silistre, did not completely invest in the fortress, with an overwhelming part of his army in a fortified camp, and he decided to assault Arab Tabya rather than take the advice of Schilder. Battles occurred primarily around the Arab Tabya and Yılanlı Tabya.

The Russian bombardment began on 16 May. It was destructive for Silistre because there were no shelters where the soldiers could escape from the nonstop bombardment. The artillery fire from the Danubian islands was beating the outer works of the fortress. After the termination of the siege, the British officer Calthorpe observed the Arab Tabya: "it had been so completely battered about by the Russian cannon, shot and shell, that the old outer line of the work could not be recognized."⁵³⁹ On 18 May, Russian reconnaissance activities resulted in a fight; the Ottomans reported that in this fight, 45 men were killed among the Ottoman ranks

⁵³⁷ BOA İ.MMS., 1/30, 20 Şaban - 2 Ramazan 1270 [18 May – 29 May 1854]

⁵³⁸ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 164.

⁵³⁹ Calthorpe, p. 66.

while 200 Russians fell.⁵⁴⁰ The following week, Ottoman forces again raided the Russian positions.⁵⁴¹ On 20 May, Prince Paskevich crossed the Danube, and inspected the attack. The Russian parallels gradually came nearer to the fortress, and the Russians continued to move forward and to explode their mines. The first serious battle occurred on 29 May in the Arab Tabya. In this bloody encounter, Russians not only failed to capture the fortress, but also suffered 1,000 casualties, including the commander of the operation Lieutenant-General Selvan. On 3 June, Russian troops moved to the region between the Mecidiye fortification and the Aflotar and Kalopetri villages. Kalopetri was in the left flank of the Russian forces and Aflotar at the back.⁵⁴² Defense of the Arab Tabya was again forced on 3 June⁵⁴³ and 9 June⁵⁴⁴, but all efforts were in vain. As Nolan claimed, “indeed, the siege of Silistria was the siege of the Arab Tabia.”⁵⁴⁵

Captain Butler claimed that there would be “no measure of importance to be undertaken without our being consulted.”⁵⁴⁶ According to Butler, Grach sought the abandonment of the Arab and Yılancı Tabyas, as he believed that they were not defendable. Butler’s journal proceeded in this manner day after day, recording the devastation and death caused by shelling. Bombardment was daily business at Silistre. Musa Pasha was killed on 2 June as a result of the heavy Russian cannony. Subsequently, Mehmed Rıfat Pasha assumed command. Schilder was also killed when he was controlling mine works on 13 June. Paskevich left the scene under the pretext of being wounded. How he was wounded and how he explained it to the Tsar and others was ironically explained by Menkov. Menkov’s reminiscences at least

⁵⁴⁰ BOA İ.MMS., 1/30.

⁵⁴¹ BOA İ.MMS., 1/31.

⁵⁴² *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 162.

⁵⁴³ BOA İ.DH., 301/19068, 13 Ramazan 1270 [9 June 1854]

⁵⁴⁴ BOA İ.DH., 302/19165, 25 Ramazan 1270 [21 June 1854]

⁵⁴⁵ Nolan, p. 221.

⁵⁴⁶ Woods, p. 134.

signify that many participants in the siege did not believe in his story of being wounded.⁵⁴⁷

During the siege, neither the Allied forces nor Ömer Pasha himself appeared in front of Silistre. Some forces with ammunitions and provisions on 2 June, and a more powerful force on 12 June under the command of Behram Pasha (General Cannon) arrived at Silistre.⁵⁴⁸ Behram Pasha's force was composed of 4 battalions of infantry, 1 battalion of chasseurs, 400 Arab cavalry, and 6 mountain pieces with mules. Ömer Pasha calmed both Musa Pasha and the Ottoman government in declaring Silistre would not fall soon⁵⁴⁹, but he hastened the allied assistance, claiming that Silistre could not stand long.⁵⁵⁰ Actually, the defense of Silistre and the retreat of the Russian army astonished the European powers.

Knyaz Bebutov was stationed in Kalipetri, and the link between the fortress and Şumnu was eliminated by 16 June. Under the command of General Gorchakov, the siege continued until 20 June 1854, when Paskevich's order for retreat arrived.⁵⁵¹ After several insisting reports from Paskevich regarding the necessity of the abandonment of the siege and the retreat of the Russian troops due to the danger posed by the Austrian troops on the flank of the Russian army as well as the possibility of assistance from a strong Turkish-British-French army to Silistre, the Tsar finally gave orders according to the wishes of Paskevich on 13 June. Parallel to this order, on 18 June, Paskevich happily sent a letter to Gorchakov from Yassy seeking the abandonment of the siege. Paskevich frankly stated that "our wish was

⁵⁴⁷ According to Bogdanovich and Petrov, Paskevich was wounded on 9 June, but Menkov claimed that the incident occurred on 3 June. *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, pp. 162-164.

⁵⁴⁸ *Silistre Muhasarasi*, p. 87; Petrov, vol. II, p. 160, 168-169.

⁵⁴⁹ BOA İ.MMS., 1/31, 18 Şaban - 6 Ramazan 1270 [16 May – 2 June 1854]

⁵⁵⁰ Tarle, vol. II, s. 509.

⁵⁵¹ N. K. Schilder, *O sochinenii A. N. Petrova. Voina Rossii s Turtsiei. Dunaiskaya kampaniya 1853-54 gg* (St Petersburg, 1894), pp. 16-17.

realized”.⁵⁵² Zayonchkovskii rightfully remarked that the Tsar did not give a categorical order to lift the siege. Nicholas I ordered as follows: “lift the siege if the fortress has not been fallen yet when this letter has arrived or if it is not clear when it may fall”. According to Zayonchkovskii, it was Paskevich who was responsible for abandoning the siege at the very moment when a successful assault could be undertaken.⁵⁵³

Actually, for that same day, 20-21 June, a promising assault was planned on the Arab Tabya, which had partly been destroyed by the Russian mines. It was General Belgard who would undertake the assault. According to Menkov, the assault was planned to be undertaken on 19 June, but because of the heavy rain, it was postponed for one day. On 22 June, the Russians opened tremendous fire on the place from all their batteries. When daylight dawned on 23, the Ottomans noticed that the bulk of the enemy army had already crossed the Danube and had encamped around Kalaraş. The siege was at an end.

The retreat began on 23 June, and in two days, the Russian forces were again at the left bank of the Danube River. On 26 June, the pontoon bridges were completely lifted under the cannonry of both sides. According to Russian sources, the cost of the siege was approximately 400 killed and 1,800 wounded.⁵⁵⁴ Ömer Pasha wrote to Saint-Arnoud that the garrison of Silistre losses included only 1,500 men killed and

⁵⁵² Both letters can be found in a footnote added by Zayonchkovskii to the diaries of Menkov. *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, pp. 169-170.

⁵⁵³ A. M. Zayonchkovskii, *Vostochnaya voyna 1853-1856 gg.*, vol. II, part II (St. Petersburg, 1913), p. 1006.

⁵⁵⁴ Petrov, vol. II, p. 181.

wounded.⁵⁵⁵ The Russians had not only lost a significant number of men in front of the outworks of Silistre, but they also had lost prestige.

One aspect of the siege of Silistre was the emigration of Bulgarians. According to the proclamation of Knyaz Paskevich in the Bulgarian language, the Bulgarians were armed. In the siege camp, arms were distributed to the Bulgarians. When the Russians lifted the siege, Bulgarian villagers with their family members, belongings and livestocks attempted to escape from the vengeance of the Ottomans and crossed to the left bank of the Danube with the Russian army. By 24 and 25 June, the number of families who crossed the river reached 5,000. Such a large number of emigrants restrained the crossing of the armed forces; thus, further emigrants were not allowed.⁵⁵⁶ Those who remained were advised to go to Tulça, where there were Russian forces under the command of General Nikolai Ushakov.⁵⁵⁷

The river crossing was completed by the Russian army on the night of 25 June to 26 June.⁵⁵⁸ Although the Russian sources did not give any credit to the Ottoman army, the treacherous policies of Austria and the hesitancy of the Russian army command were portrayed as the two major reasons for the Russian failure on the Danubian front.⁵⁵⁹

Toward the end of February 1854, Britain and France issued an ultimatum to St. Petersburg to withdraw the Russian forces from the Principalities. Without any satisfactory answer from the Russian government, Britain and France concluded an agreement of alliance with the Ottoman government on 12 March. On 27 March, the

⁵⁵⁵ Zayonchkovskii, p. 1007.

⁵⁵⁶ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 171.

⁵⁵⁷ Menkov, p.174. See for the Russian proclamation to the Bulgarians signed by Paskevich. Menkov, p. 187.

⁵⁵⁸ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 174.

⁵⁵⁹ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 191.

naval powers declared war on Russia, and the first troops landed in Gelibolu on 31 March.

A Russian operation in Bulgaria would not be easy; Paskevich was generally right to be concerned. The Russians would certainly lose men in the pestiferous Dobruja, and as long as the Ottomans held Kalafat, the Russians were never secure on their right flank. More importantly, the Russian army had no security in the northern flank, as Austrians could move across the Russian line of communications. Thus, although the Tsar could mobilize 150,000 men in the Balkans, this number might have been insufficient for a successful campaign. Nicholas I did not hesitate to confront these dangers. He obviously believed in the success of the Russian army more than his commanders at the field.

In 1854, the Russian army repeated the mistake of 1828; throughout the siege, the Russians were not able to eliminate communication between the town and Ömer Pasha in Şumnu. Although some reinforcements could be sent to Silistre because of the inefficiency of the siege, the Ottoman army again failed to come to the help of a besieged town. The fate of Silistre differed from that of Kars only because the Russians chose to retreat rather than to continue their siege and assaults. The reason for the retreat was not the forthcoming help to Silistre but the threat of Austria from the rear of the Russian army.

Bombardment had become a daily affair. Butler's journal recorded the devastation and death caused by shelling. The explosive shell had a tremendous destructive capability compared with the former non-explosive shells. In both Kars and Silistre, the Russian assaults failed. This outcome showed the increasing defensive capacity of the fortifications as a result of the destructive capacity of the

new technology armament. However, the Ottomans could not always utilize this advantage against the enemy, in failing to assist the fortified towns during their fight against the Russian army. Kars of 1855 and Plevne of 1877 are celebrated examples of such failures.

5.4. Russia's Retreat from the Principalities

As one Russian officer claimed, “the year of 1854 ended sadly for Russia.”⁵⁶⁰ The Russian forces not only failed to advance in Bulgaria but also retreated from the Principalities. After the failure of the siege of Silistre, the Russians rapidly crossed the Danube back to the right bank. On 29 June, the Russian headquarters moved to the village of Maya-Katarji-lui (?). The rearguard forces were under the command of Anrep-Elmpt. As the Russian offensive was at an end, a fresh Ottoman offensive was likely to be launched. The retreating Russians were frightened of an Ottoman assault from behind.

Many Russians found the reason for the failure in the ‘treachery of Austria’. The Austrians, who were assisted by the Russian army during the Hungarian revolt in 1848, signed an agreement with the Porte aiming to oust the Russian forces from the Balkans. On 14 June, the Porte and Austria signed the convention of Boyacıköy, whereby Austria would occupy the Principalities temporarily. By the summer of 1854, the Russians considered that a war with Austria would be inevitable if they insisted on remaining in the Principalities.⁵⁶¹ According to this agreement, Austria not only posed a threat against Russia during its offensive but also played an

⁵⁶⁰ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 185.

⁵⁶¹ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 174.

intermediary role in not allowing the hostilities in the Principalities to be prolonged. The retreat of the Russian army would be followed by a joint invasion of the Principalities by Austria and the Ottoman Empire. On 1 August, the Russian army departed from Bucharest. The Ottomans entered the city on 8 August under the command of Halim Pasha.⁵⁶²

5.4.1. The Battle of Yergöğü, 7 July 1854

In late June, General Soymonov, Commander of the Russian troops in Yergöğü, reported an increase in the Ottoman troops in Rusçuk. An increase in Ottoman vessels on the mouth of the Lom also indicated the possibility of an Ottoman attack on Yergöğü. On 4 July, Gorchakov sent Khrulev to Yergöğü to organize the batteries to prevent any possible assault. However, General Dannenberg, Commander of the 4th army who was responsible for the forces in Yergöğü and its vicinity, did not allow Khrulev to proceed to Yergöğü on the same day. Dannenberg only dispatched batteries on 5 July, at a time when the Ottomans had already invaded Mokanoğlu (Makan) Island. The following day, Dannenberg sent Khrulev to Yergöğü, but it was too late to situate the artillery in the best way.⁵⁶³

According to the Russian sources, Ömer Lütfi Pasha, who planned an attack, assembled more than 30,000 men at Rusçuk.⁵⁶⁴ In fact, it was not the Ottoman commander-in-chief who planned the assault. Ömer Lütfi Pasha had scarcely reached Şumnu when he learned of the conflict on the Danube. The assault was realized

⁵⁶² Baumgart, p. 104.

⁵⁶³ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 177

⁵⁶⁴ Petrov, vol. II, p. 210.

under the command and initiative of Hasan Hakkı Pasha.⁵⁶⁵ Many British officers were also in Yergöğü including sappers Anderson and Swann; Lieutenants Meynell, Hinde, Arnold, Burke, and Ballard; Captain Bent; Colonel Ogilvy; and General Cannon. They also seemed to support an offensive operation.⁵⁶⁶

On 7 July 1854, the Ottomans attempted to land on the islands and the right bank of the river with the help of a heavy bombardment. Hand-to-hand fighting erupted between the Ottoman and Russian forces. Some troops crossed the river to Mokanoğlu in front of Rusçuk whereas others joined them by marching to the left bank. The Ottoman units landed and took up a position on the island. The steady fire of the Ottoman rifles initially repelled the Russians, who gained ground in time. The Ottomans would have been swept into the Danube had reinforcement not arrived at a critical moment. The Ottomans were reinforced from Rusçuk and had 5,000 troops on the left bank. The fight lasted for ten hours. When the sun set, the Ottoman troops stood masters of the left bank and victors in one of the most hotly-contested fights.⁵⁶⁷ According to the Russians, the enemy forces failed in their attempt, which cost them six thousand men, killed and wounded.⁵⁶⁸ The Ottoman reports also exaggerated the losses of the enemy, claiming five to seven thousand casualties, whereas their own losses were insignificant. Thus, the Ottomans perceived the battle on the islands of Kama and Mokan as a victory, after which they invaded Yergöğü.⁵⁶⁹ In fact, it was a bloody but indecisive battle and did not furnish any significant military outcome for the Ottomans.⁵⁷⁰ Yergöğü was the final significant armed encounter on this front.

⁵⁶⁵ Czajkowski, p. 56.

⁵⁶⁶ James Henry Skene, *With Lord Stratford in the Crimean War* (London, 1883), pp. 88-89.

⁵⁶⁷ Cassell's *Illustrated History of England*, vol. VIII, p.178.

⁵⁶⁸ Petrov, vol. II, pp. 210-215.

⁵⁶⁹ ATASE, k. 46, d. 1, f. 32 and 32-1, 16 Şevval 1270 [12 July 1854].

⁵⁷⁰ Alabin, p. 85.

Eventually, the Ottomans did not pursue the enemy troops further and instead waited while the Russians gradually evacuated the Principalities.

5.4.2. The Plans for an Operation into Bessarabia

Ömer Lütfi Pasha wanted the operations on the Danubian front continued and an offensive directed at Bessarabia. However, the Allies thought an operation to capture Sevastopol was more realistic to conclude the war with a glorious victory. The Crimean campaign gave the initiative for the war to the Allied commanders. The presence of the Allied forces in Varna had a moral effect on the Ottoman army rather than providing military support. In fact, the Allies did not want to waste their forces to help the Ottomans. Only the fall of Silistre and an advance of the Russian armies might have forced them to act in the Balkans.

Because Ömer Lütfi Pasha clearly did not want to fall into a secondary position, he did not take command of the Ottoman forces after the Allied landing in the Crimean peninsula. Having stayed at Şumnu, he waited for an opportunity for the Ottoman army to fight against the Russians. However, when more Ottoman forces were requested in the Crimea, he had no other choice but to take command at Gözleve. During his presence in the Crimea, he continued to seek other military operations in which he would enjoy the full command. The opportunity emerged in the Caucasus, where he sought to save the fortress of Kars, but he was late in initiating the campaign.

5.4.3. The Failed French Campaign in Dobruja

The French initiated a military campaign into Dobruja. Although it failed, it was an interesting attempt. Its aims were to reconnoiter the Russian forces, move the forces, and, most importantly, prevent the spread of cholera among the ranks. However, the result was a catastrophic annihilation of the troops sent into this unhealthy territory. The *başibozuk* units, who included approximately 2000-3000 men under the command of General Yusuf, moved from Varna and arrived at Dobruja via Pazarcık and Babadağı. The French divisions under the command of General Canrobert were transferred via naval vessels from Varna to Köstence. While the forces of Ushakov in Dobruja were retreating, the *başibozuk* units under the command of General Yusuf attacked. The *başibozuks* returned from Dobruja in a miserable situation, and the only positive result of the operation was the information that no significant Russian forces were left in Dobruja. In the end, half of the army remained active, while the other half was either hospitalized or killed.

Lord Cardigan and a light cavalry were sent to patrol as far as the Dobruja. They rode through a desolate country for seventeen days and saw no enemy. However, after undergoing great privation from the lack of food, water, forage, and shelter, they returned, having lost 280 horses. The Russians were far away across the Danube, and even if the Allies had wanted to follow them, they lacked transportation.

5.4.4 The Ottoman Forces in the Principalities

On 6 August the Ottoman columns coming from the Danube and the Aluta met at Bucharest. On 8 August 1854, the first Ottoman forces under the command of Halim Pasha entered Bucharest.⁵⁷¹ Ömer Lütfi Pasha also arrived at the capital of Wallachia twenty days after the occupation of the city by the Ottoman troops. He gloriously entered the city.⁵⁷² The Ottoman army occupied Wallachia with the forces of more than 50,000 men by October 1854: In Bucharest 25,000, in Rusçuk 15,000, in Kalaraş about 10,000, in Slobedze and in Tsendere 3,000. There were 2000 men in İbrail under the command of Mehmed Sadık Pasha. There were totally 55,000 Ottoman forces in Wallachia. On 6 September, the Austrian forces entered Bucharest.⁵⁷³

Considerable friction developed between the Ottoman and Austrian forces because both armies tried to occupy more territories of Wallachia. Worse, the Ottoman and Austrian military commands issued proclamations calling the inhabitants to obey their own orders. Similar problems also occurred in İbrail and Kalas.⁵⁷⁴

The main Russian forces that left Bucharest in late July arrived at Skuliani on 16 September.⁵⁷⁵ Kishinev was then the headquarters of Russia's South Army. From 27 July to 16 September, Russia evacuated the Principalities and crossed the left side of the Prut River in preparation for the defense of Sevastopol. On 1 November 1854 the last Russian forces on the right bank of the Danube also crossed the river to

⁵⁷¹ Baumgart, p. 104.

⁵⁷² "Zapiski Mikhaila Chaikovskogo", *Russkaya starina*, 1898, no. 12, p. 676.

⁵⁷³ Baumgart, p. 106.

⁵⁷⁴ Baumgart, p. 106.

⁵⁷⁵ *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 183, 193.

Bessarabia.⁵⁷⁶ Minor fights between the Allied powers and the Russian Cossack continued until that time.

The peaceful occupation of the Principalities and the transfer of Anglo-French troops to the Crimea removed the danger of war continuing in the Balkans. The Austrians were successful in encouraging the Russian troops to evacuate the Principalities. According to Baumgart, Austria was therefore the sole power responsible for preventing a European war:

Austria's pressure on Russia to evacuate the Principalities and their subsequent occupation by Austrian troops not only removed the danger of war in south-eastern Europe, but also of an Austro-Russian war, which would almost automatically have entailed the entry of Prussia and the rest of Germany into the war, and probably that of other countries in Europe like Sweden. Thus Austria's stand prevented the Crimean War from developing into a European and even a world war.⁵⁷⁷

5.5. Conclusion

Parallel to the euphoria of the time, a British author portrayed the warfare on the Danube using an obvious exaggeration: "The campaign on the Danube in 1853-4 will ever remain an honourable memento for the Turks. Theirs were the efforts; theirs the strategy; theirs the danger; theirs the success; and theirs also should be the praise."⁵⁷⁸ Although it is clearly an overstatement of the Ottoman success, it can safely be claimed that the Ottomans had long fought well against their colossal neighbor. The Ottoman tactics were clear and feasible. It was first necessary to hold strategic positions on the right bank and on the islands. Ömer Lütfi Pasha also aimed to demoralize the Russians with minor battles. It is not clear whether the Ottomans

⁵⁷⁶ Otstavnoi, "Vospominaniya o voine na Dunae v 1853-54 godov", *Voennyi sbornik*, 1860, no. 8, p. 438; *Zapiski Menkova*, vol. I, p. 184.

⁵⁷⁷ Baumgart, p. 106.

⁵⁷⁸ Dodd, p. 30.

could have succeeded to that extent without the intervention of the Great Powers against a more resolute Russian power. However, the Ottoman Danubian army showed that they possessed the potential to stop the Russians.

CHAPTER VI

BEHIND THE FRONT

ARMY AND SOCIETY

Modern war has been conducted both by professional armies and civilians who happen to be on the front and assist the fighting troops by participating in many wartime activities. Civilians are both actors in and victims of fighting. This chapter narrates the developments behind the front in the Balkans. It discusses the social aspects of the Crimean War that the historiography has generally neglected. One section is a general observation about relationships between civilians and the military during the war. Wartime intelligence activities are also explained in this chapter because the contributors to espionage were generally unprofessional civilians. Another section focuses on the prisoners of war, who were mostly soldiers, but their life in captivity is more social history than military history.

6.1. Ottoman and Russian Intelligence in the Balkans during the Crimean War

This section offers a comparative analysis of the Ottoman and Russian military intelligence activities in the Balkan front of the Crimean War. When necessary, the spying activities in other fronts will also be pointed out.

6.1.1. The Setting

The newly invented telegraph - one of the most important innovations for communication and intelligence - began to be used in the Balkans only in 1855 when the Russian forces had already left the scene. To be sure it was difficult to convey intelligence via traditional methods. Moreover, the peculiarities of the Balkan topography reduced the chances of information arriving at its destination in due course. The landscape of the Ottoman Balkans, especially the seasonal changes of the River Danube, was a significant handicap for necessary communication. The river was such a hardy geographical barrier that in the nineteenth century, an army could only pass the Danube at certain locations and time periods. Locating the possible passage points and discovering the defensive or offensive preparations of the enemy were thus major themes of reconnaissance and vital subjects of intelligence reports. Nevertheless, the logistics and the communication of the Danubian theater were far better than those of the Caucasus.⁵⁷⁹ A letter from Istanbul could arrive at Şumnu, the headquarters of the Ottoman army, in two days. The roads

⁵⁷⁹ Without a telegraph, a message from Colonel William Fenwick Williams, British commissioner in the Kars fortress, could be received by Lord Clarendon, the secretary of state in London, after a month, and a reply required another month. Therefore, when a letter arrived at its destination, it was possible that the circumstances had already changed.

were far better and the destinations were closer. Steamboats between Varna and Istanbul made it easier to communicate with the army. The *tatars* (messengers) were likely more numerous and better trained. Overall, that theater could endanger the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and any mistake could cause grave results.

The positions and policies of other European powers were of great importance, as alliances might dramatically shift the balance in the forthcoming war. Therefore, the Russians and the Ottomans permitted economic transactions in the Balkans so as not to alienate other states. As a result, several channels of information were possible at least until the spring of 1854, when France and Britain declared war on Russia. Afterwards, the Ottomans unsurprisingly enjoyed a more favorable international environment, while the Russians utilized previously established contacts in the Ottoman lands.

In fact, the characteristics of the local population offered large-scale possibilities for information-gathering. Espionage was employed not only to observe the movements and targets of the enemy but also, importantly, to understand the attitudes and possible conduct of the inhabitants of the related regions. Accordingly, the Christian Orthodox population of the Ottoman Empire constituted an essential instrument as well as a major subject of espionage activities. The cosmopolitan populations of Dobruja, Bessarabia, and several cities on the Danube provided a convenient environment to identify collaborators. Both armies were able to locate friendly populations in the Balkans who might transmit useful information. While several Bulgarian *çorbacis* (notables) notified the Russians concerning the developments in the Ottoman army quarters, there were some pro-Ottoman local

elites in Wallachia, particularly in Bucharest, who informed the Ottomans about the Russian army stationed in the Principalities.

6.1.2 Channels of Information

The use of intelligence agents was not novel for either the Ottomans or the Russians. In addition to war-time intelligence activities, both Russia and the Ottoman Empire had a tradition of employing intelligence-gathering for domestic security for centuries. Janissaries played the role of the military police and conducted domestic surveillance.⁵⁸⁰ After the termination of this traditional Ottoman institution, the *Tanzimat* reforms needed the careful observation of public opinion.⁵⁸¹ Domestic surveillance was finally institutionalized by the establishment of the Turkish police (*Zaptiye*) in 1844. During the Crimean War, the Ottoman government accelerated its intelligence activities for “investigating the attitude of the Christian subjects”.⁵⁸² Agents were sent out in plain clothes to patrol public places. Sitting in pubs, coffeehouses and churches, they tried to understand the opinion of the Christian subjects regarding the ongoing war, and they reported their findings to the Ottoman government.⁵⁸³

Russia also had a long tradition of surveillance and control of its own population. The *Oprichnina* and *Tainyi Prikaz* in the 15th and 16th centuries were probably the roots of the famous Russian secret police organization *Tret'e Otdelenie* (Third Section of His Imperial Majesty's Own Chancellery), which was established

⁵⁸⁰ Ágoston, p. 79.

⁵⁸¹ Cengiz Kırkı published about 1300 agent reports sent within 1840-1844. Kırkı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*.

⁵⁸² “*istitlâ-yi ahvâl-i raiyyet*” BOA, A.MKT.NZD 112-113.

⁵⁸³ “*meyhane, kahvehane ve kiliselerde birlikte oturup musahabet esnâsında*” Same document.

in 1826. The Third Section was under the direct control of the tsar, and it was one of the pillars of Nicholas I's regime. The Russian secret police sent out spies, investigators, and gendarmes throughout the country to monitor every perceived threat from distrusted segments of the society, such as revolutionaries, Muslims, Poles, Old Believers and foreigners.⁵⁸⁴ After its founding, the Russian secret police initiated foreign missions as well.⁵⁸⁵ During the Crimean War, the Third Section had several contacts with the Orthodox population of both Istanbul and the Balkans. However, the Russian state was unable to utilize these established ties to ignite a popular Christian revolt in the Ottoman territories.

Moreover, Russia was more interested in and better informed about the rival army. Russia sent not only a permanent ambassador to Istanbul but also a military agent. During peacetime, Colonel Count Osten-Sacken, the Russian military agent, sent detailed and accurate reports regarding the Ottoman army corps and its fortifications.⁵⁸⁶ The Ottomans, on the other hand, had only a rudimentary knowledge of the Russian army and government. Therefore, Russia, which was better prepared for a possible war, was more familiar with its opponent's power. One significant and certain advantage for the Ottomans was that any possible war would be waged on its own territory. They also did not seem to have any revanchist policy

⁵⁸⁴ For classical works on the Russian Police, see Sidney Monas, *Third Section: Police and Society under Nicholas I* (Cambridge and Massachusetts, 1961); Peter Stansfield Squire, *The Third Department: The Establishment and Practice of the Political Police in the Russia of Nicholas I* (Cambridge, 1968); For a recent treatment, A. G. Chukarev, *Tainaya politsiya Rossii: 1825-1855* (Moscow, 2005).

⁵⁸⁵ Kolpakidi and Sever, p. 277; Some influential Russian nobles living in the European capitals were also in cooperation with the Russian Secret Police and the Russian Foreign Ministry. For instance, Yakov Nikolaievich Tolstoi and Daria Khristoforovna Lieven who enjoyed friendships in the European high society frequently informed the Russian government regarding the political developments. For the activities of Tolstoi in Paris during the Crimean War, see, Cherkasov, *Russkii agent vo Frantsii. Yakov Nikolaievich Tolstoi*, pp. 351-385. For Lady Lieven, Primakov (ed.), *Ocherki istorii rossiiskoi vneshnei razvedki*, vol I, pp. 115-121.

⁵⁸⁶ See, RGVIA, f. 450, op. 1, d. 45-55.

towards Russia. However, this fact did not excuse the Ottomans from learning more about the Russian army, which posed a direct threat to the Ottoman throne.

There were three basic means of learning about enemies during the war: spies, prisoners of war (or deserters), and reconnaissance (especially the patrol of irregular cavalry). Nevertheless, the sources of information were not limited to these three categories: rather, a European consul, a trusted merchant⁵⁸⁷, a local notable or even a passer-by could well be a source of information. In the Balkans, such a diverse and intensive flow of information resulted in volumes of reports, notes and letters, whether accurate or misleading.

Diplomatic missions were inherently a part of the intelligence business. Invaluable information could be attained through long-established connections in different parts of Europe. Accordingly, the missions in European capitals as well as in several Balkan cities participated in the information-gathering and -disseminating activities. The Russians and Ottomans had friends to approach for information. While the Greek consuls⁵⁸⁸ readily assisted Russia, the consuls of the European powers generally assisted the Ottomans in their intelligence search.⁵⁸⁹

Ordinary merchants were also very useful. For instance, Stan Baiculescu, a merchant from Bucharest, visited the Ottoman territory; upon his return, he informed the Russian headquarters about the Ottoman army.⁵⁹⁰ Arslan, an Ottoman merchant and resident of Tulça (Tulcea), was interrogated three times by the Russian authorities when he was in Kalas for his own business. He was asked about the

⁵⁸⁷ See, for instance, ATASE, Crimean War Collection, k. 2, d. 7, f. 26; k. 8, d. 3, f. 1; GARF, f. 109, First Expedition, op. 28, d. 170, ch. 3.

⁵⁸⁸ The Greek consul in Kalas informed the Russians. RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5443.

⁵⁸⁹ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 25; k. 4, d. 11, f. 17-2.

⁵⁹⁰ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5459, l. 354 ob. (*voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*)

Ottoman forces in Tulça and İsakçı (Isakcea).⁵⁹¹ Prisoners of war and deserters were another important source of valuable information. They could at least give the numbers and location of the enemy forces, if not the strategy and aims of the opponent.

While the Ottoman government's relations with Russia were becoming more tense, it asked the local authorities to "secretly and in a suitable fashion" ask people visiting the other bank of the Danube River about the state of affairs and the enemy activities.⁵⁹² Although other sources might have provided a considerable amount of information, they needed to be validated by more reliable mechanisms such as the institutionalized espionage network. Commanders and governors in the region thus dispatched their spies to the field. Immediately following the failure of the Menshikov Mission, the commanders and governors in the Balkans initiated their search for information regarding Russian activities. The governor of Vidin, Lieutenant-General Mehmed Sâlim Pasha; commander of the forces in Babadağ, Brigadier-General Yusuf Pasha; commander (*Muhafiz*) of the Quadruple fortresses,⁵⁹³ Brigadier-General Mehmed Pasha; and civil governor (*Müdîr*) of Silistre, İbrahim *Agâ*⁵⁹⁴ were asked for new information by the central government. The prominent Ottoman officials in the Balkans, Said Mirza Pasha, the Governor of Silistre, and Ömer Lütfî Pasha, first commander of the *Rumeli* (Third) Army and later commander-in-chief of the Ottoman armies, also dispatched their agents to collect information.⁵⁹⁵ Eventually, during the hostilities numerous spy reports were

⁵⁹¹ BOA, İ.DH 281- 17615.

⁵⁹² ATASE, k. 2, d. 6, f. 19.

⁵⁹³ Silistre, Varna, Rusçuk and Şumnu.

⁵⁹⁴ In other documents, he was called *Kaymakam* İbrahim Bey. Later, he would be promoted to Pasha.

⁵⁹⁵ They were warned that the investigation should be kept confidential so as not to provide Russia with a pretext for a war.

handed for evaluation either to the Ottoman army command in Şumnu or to the Ottoman government.

Numerous Ottoman officers collected information, but it was not their primary obligation. Therefore, any coordination among the commanders seems to be dubious. On this strategic front, however, the Ottoman government employed another high official, whose mission was limited to the collection of information. On May 29, just after the diplomatic rupture with Russia, Colonel (*Miralay*) İslâm Bey, a member of the Naval Council (*Meclis-i Bahriye azâsi*), was assigned to the Lower Danube.⁵⁹⁶ He was described as an able man who was competent to perform the duty of a *tahkîk memuru*, or an investigator. He likely had an adequate knowledge of the terrain where he was sent. İslâm Bey played a key role as an intermediary between various anonymous agents in Dobruja and the Porte. Having arrived at Tulça on June 7, he promptly began to search for new information, and he sent his first letter just three days after his arrival. In this letter, he openly argued that it would be impossible to obtain information from Bessarabia and İsmail due to strict Russian control: “To say nothing about the Ottoman subjects, even the Europeans cannot be sent from here [Dobruja] to the Russian territories”.⁵⁹⁷ Although his activities were limited to the towns of İsakçı, Tulça, Maçin and İbrail, his duty was to directly and regularly post reports to the Ottoman capital until the Russian invasion of Dobruja. However, he did not have the responsibility of organizing the information-gathering in the Balkans. Rather, his assignment reflected the need or the desire of the Porte to have its own corridor to the information gathering.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁶ Initially, Brigadier-General of Artillery (*Mirliva*) Hüseyin Pasha was considered for this mission, but due to his illness, İslâm Bey was assigned. BOA, İ.DH 272-17020.

⁵⁹⁷ Miralay İslâm Bey to Serasker, ATASE, k. 8, d.3, f. 2.

⁵⁹⁸ His career after the invasion of Dobruja is not clear.

The Russians, on the other hand, turned to the governor-general of New Russia and Bessarabia, General Annenkov; the commander of the Russian Third Army, General Osten-Sacken; and General Lüders, the commander of the Fifth Army, for fresh information. The cities of Odessa and İsmail were open gates to information regarding the neighboring empire. Russian commanders received various letters from the right bank of the river. In war-time, spies were in contact with a certain Captain Mikhailov and Colonel Brynza, the former in İsmail and the latter in Kili. These two Russian commanders acted as intermediaries between the agents and the Russian quarters.

6.1.3. In Search of “Able and Reliable Men”

Secret agents were the most interesting elements of information gathering. Ottomans called their agents “secret investigator” (*tahkikat-i hafiyye memuru, hafiyye memuru*), “investigator” (*tahkikat memuru, tahkik memuru*), or “spy” (*casus*), and the Russians termed them “secret agent” (*tainyi agent*) or “spy” (*lazutchik, shpion*). The words *casus* and *shpion* both possessed negative connotations; thus, they were generally used for the enemy agents.⁵⁹⁹ To find confident and able men in a hostile territory who could provide information was of utmost importance. Agents did not have any formal training. In fact, neither the Russians nor the Ottomans had a

⁵⁹⁹ To be sure, the negative connotation of the spy or *casus* was not new. For instance, there was a similar difference between the words for the secret agents in the Venetian usage. As Madunić claims, “The Venetians of the 17th century used varieties of terms: *spia*, *spione*, *confidente*, *esploratore*, *messo*, *persona expressa*, *agente segreto* etc. In the 17th century, the word *spia* held derogatory connotations and was mainly used for the persons in the service of the enemy who were operating under secrecy within one's territory. When referring to its own spies sent into enemy territory in order to obtain some information, Venetian sources would usually use words like: *esploratore*, *persona expressa*, or *messo*”. Domagoj Madunić, *Secret War: Venetian Intelligence and Espionage Activities during the War for Crete (1645-1669)*, article presented at the conference “Power and Influence in South-Eastern Europe, 16-19th Centuries” (Sofia, 2010).

central bureaucratized intelligence agency. Therefore, the employment of spies can be described as *ad hoc* rather than planned or systematic. An “able” man was of course familiar with the territory, the people and the language and knew how to gather information without revealing himself. For instance, the *Serasker* wanted the Ottoman commanders on the Danube to “dispatch truly trustworthy and reliable agents who are intimate of language [of the region] in the suitable dress...”⁶⁰⁰ Islam Bey was able to bypass the quarantine with such a reliable agent:

Although the quarantine of the other side prevents [us] from getting constant intelligence in the Principalities and the neighborhoods, a reliable and able man who has a Prussian passport and [therefore] who cannot be intercepted whatsoever have been found and sent in disguise to investigate adequately the situation of the aforementioned place [Wallachia].⁶⁰¹

Previous work with diplomatic figures, past friendships, and good references were important criteria for a “reliable man”. Nevertheless, it was often difficult to combine the qualities of “able” and “reliable”. People who had contacts in both Bulgaria and the Principalities were generally cosmopolitan figures and could work for anyone. Such people were likely to benefit from the crisis environment in the Balkans and possibly worked as double agents in the region.

There were a certain number of salaried Ottoman agents. According to an Ottoman document, agents in Istanbul were paid a total of 10,000 *kuruş* monthly, which was deemed to be insufficient during wartime. Some other agents collected allowances in accordance with their contributions to the information gathering; for this purpose, 20,000 *kuruş* in total were reserved by the State Treasury.⁶⁰² There

⁶⁰⁰ ATASE, k. 2, d. 6, f. 19.

⁶⁰¹ ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 3/1.

⁶⁰² BOA, *IDH* 293-18463.

were also agents employed and paid by the local authorities in different regions of the Empire. In short, the number of agents employed and their cost to the Ottoman government are impossible to determine.⁶⁰³ It can be argued that numerous agents were used and that their cost was above dispute considering the value of information in wartime. However, the Russian army and the Russian secret police also deployed reliable agents to the Balkans. Many Ottoman subjects, especially Jews, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians and Montenegrins, assisted Russia with information from the right bank of the Danube River. They were rewarded for their assistance. The number of the Russian agents and their cost are also uncertain.

Both sides took pains to break through the enemy lines; however, they also had to prevent the outflow of intelligence from their quarantines. Neither collecting nor communicating the acquired information was easy. It was especially difficult on the Danube. To escape from the quarantines, secret meetings were arranged and special signs, such as lighting a cigarette, were designated. Sometimes, a man would leave a letter at a predetermined location in daylight to be taken by the Russians crossing the river at night. The man who placed the letter would be remunerated.⁶⁰⁴ On dangerous routes, the correspondence was written in code or using special signs as a precautionary measure.⁶⁰⁵ Although it is unlikely that the critical army codes were shared with spies, some of them used ciphers in their assignments.

Spies were specially treated and rewarded in the ranks, but they were not respected by the enemy. Traitors have always been treated with contempt, so both

⁶⁰³ According to Kirlı, an agent received 600-650 *kuruş* monthly in the 1840s. If the salary remained unchanged, there might have been 16 salaried Ottoman agents. Kirlı, *Sultan ve Kamuoyu*, p. 8.

⁶⁰⁴ "Governor of Silistre to the Sublime Porte", BOA, *HR.MKT* 66-29.

⁶⁰⁵ Humpry Sandwith, a doctor who worked for the Ottoman army on the Caucasian front, claimed in his memoirs, "Each night we send out men, sometimes officers, to Erzeroon, disguised as peasants, carrying notes in cipher rolled up and put into quills, which they carry in their hands and drop if surprised by Cossacks". Humpry Sandwith, *A Narrative of the Siege of Kars* (London, 1856), p. 299.

antagonists expressed their distaste for spies. Spying was a dishonorable act (*fezahât-ı azîme*), and the Ottomans called the captured spies “disgraceful persons” (*eşhas-ı rezile*).⁶⁰⁶ Traditionally, harsh punishments were applied to the spies. The Ottomans executed some of them by shooting.⁶⁰⁷ The rest were either sentenced to forced labor (in the State Shipyard, the State Farm, etc.)⁶⁰⁸ or exiled to an Anatolian city (Adana, Bolu) with their families.⁶⁰⁹ Those who were executed were considered to be spies not just in word but in act as well (*kavlen ve fiilen casusluk eyledikleri*).⁶¹⁰ The Ottomans seem to have used this categorization with respect to punishing espionage.⁶¹¹ Why did those people accept a task that was punishable by death? During the interrogation of the Russian spies, the Ottoman officer explicitly asked, “It is evident that no one will serve for anyone for free abandoning his own business. For this [service] what did the Russian colonel give or promise you?”⁶¹² Money of course played a role, and agents were no doubt rewarded financially. Nayden Gerov, who was educated in Odessa, was a potential ally for the Russian army.⁶¹³ He sent several informative letters from Bulgaria in wartime.⁶¹⁴ In return, he would be the Russian consul in Filibe (Plovdiv) immediately after the war. Religious or national affiliations were also important. A Montenegrin or Greek could be a natural ally of Russia, but for a Cossack or a local Jew, it was not problematic to collaborate with either of the armies. To be sure, efficient intelligence efforts by the Crimean Tatars for the allied armies in the Crimea connected with their love and respect for the Ottoman state.

⁶⁰⁶ BOA, İ.MVL 301-12273.

⁶⁰⁷ BOA, İ.DH 290-18253.

⁶⁰⁸ BOA, İ.DH 286-17951.

⁶⁰⁹ BOA, A.MKT.MVL 77-37; BOA, HR.MKT 77-87; BOA C.AS 521-21762.

⁶¹⁰ BOA İ.DH 283-17758.

⁶¹¹ I could not identify any spy punished by the Russian army during the Crimean War.

⁶¹² ATASE k. 4, d. 11, f. 43/2.

⁶¹³ See, the first chapter of Laptev, *Rossiiskii diplomat Naiden Gerov i rossiisko-bulgarskoe sviazi*.

⁶¹⁴ *Pisma iz Bulgarii, pisannye N.G.* (Odessa, 1854).

6.1.4 Spies at Work: *Casus* vs. *Shpion*

The Nekrasov [branch of Don Cossacks] and the Zaporozhian Cossacks in Dobruja were used by the Ottomans in irregular forces, especially for collecting information through reconnaissance.⁶¹⁵ Ironically, Dobruja Cossacks were also potential sources of information for the Russian army; they provided the Russian commanders with information concerning many developments on the right bank of Danube. Cossacks of the Ottoman army were traditionally intermingled with the Crimean Tatars living in Dobruja. According to the Russians, this was a precautionary measure to prevent their possible contact with the Russian army.⁶¹⁶ Indeed, deserters from the Cossack regiments, which were not negligible in number, provided information for the Russian forces.⁶¹⁷ It was not easy to prevent contact between the local Cossack population in Dobruja and the Russian army and its espionage network. Yet it was also not easy to distinguish perfectly who was working for whom in Dobruja. Russian General Ushakov, for instance, openly uttered his cynical stance concerning the Cossack spies:

It is true that such information was primarily conveyed to us by Nekrasovtsy who were famous with their jugglery and indisposition to Russia. Perhaps, they even surrendered us deliberately for money that they would receive from Turkish commanders in exchange for exaggerating the difficulty of crossing [Danube River] to Machin, around which located many rich Nekrasov villages, as well-known, [this place was] always an asylum for our run-away heretics.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ Avigdor Levy, “The Contribution of Zaporozhian Cossacks to Ottoman Military Reform: Documents and Notes”, p. 377.

⁶¹⁶ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5399, l. 184.

⁶¹⁷ ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 43.

⁶¹⁸ Ushakov, p. 66.

Some Cossack spies were captured and punished by the Ottomans. Yani Hulebi, a local notable of İsakçı, was seized together with Yani Tace, Lifuraş, and Cossack Yakov of Tulça while conveying a letter to the Russian commander of Sünne (Sulina). They admitted their crimes during interrogation.⁶¹⁹ After several months, another Cossack spy group was captured. Cossack Andrushka and Cossack *çorbacı* Zaharko, who were alleged to be spies “in act and in word”, would be hanged in Şumnu. Seven additional Cossacks⁶²⁰ who were alleged to be “spies just in word” were deported to Adana in southern Anatolia together with their families.⁶²¹

According to General Ushakov, Bulgarians were much more trustworthy than the Cossacks. In his memoirs, the Russian general claims that “Bulgarians, who were more dedicated to us [Russians], were passionate in this work [espionage]”.⁶²² He further argues that the Bulgarians conveyed factual information despite the danger of offering such a service due to the common belief that they would be quickly emancipated from the Turkish yoke by the Russian army.⁶²³ In April 1855, prominent Bulgarians and Greeks of Tulça who were members of the Tulça committee, Dimitraki, Hristaki, Sütraki and Papa Dimitri and the Jew Avram, were incriminated for working for the Russians in disguise.⁶²⁴

Spying for the Russians was not limited to the Dobruja region. A famous example was Raicho Nikolov who was later a Bulgarian hero of the 1877-78 war. Nikolov, then a 13 year-old boy, informed the Russian headquarters about the

⁶¹⁹ Of these spies Grigory Muntanu died, and some others (Cossack Nikita, Yaybule) escaped. ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 43; BOA C.AS 880-37783.

⁶²⁰ Aktor Todi who was brother of Zaharko, Simyon Otobri, his brother Zaharko Otobri, Cossack Bearded [Sakallı] Dimitri, his friend Dimitri, his friend Ivan, Cossack Yefim.

⁶²¹ They arrived at Adana in July 1854 while their family would be sent later. BOA, C.AS 521-21762.

⁶²² Ushakov, p. 66.

⁶²³ Ibid, p. 104.

⁶²⁴ BOA, A.MKT.UM 188-40.

Ottoman preparations to cross the river Danube.⁶²⁵ Despite harsh punishments, Ottoman Christians did not stop working for the Russian army during the Crimean War. Mihalaki Georgiy Abram Ayoş, a Bulgarian merchant who was a resident of Ziştovi, was doing business in Yergögü. He used his trade links to visit the Rusçuk quarantine to pass letters to a certain Simyon Zulutuş who was a clerk of Hacı Tanas, a tradesman in Rusçuk. A captured letter, written in special signs and expressions, disclosed their espionage for the Russians. After being interrogated, Simyon and Mihalaki were sent to the headquarters of Ömer Lütfi Pasha.

The Russians aimed not only to attain information about the enemy forces but also to plant seeds of a revolt in the Balkan Peninsula. A visit by Feliks Fonton, a Russian diplomat in Vienna, to Serbia and the Principalities in the fall of 1853 was obviously designed to obtain information regarding the possibility of anti-Turkish uprisings. Egor Petrovich Kovalevskii, another Russian diplomat, carried out his mission to Montenegro in late December and early January to prepare a revolt in both Montenegro and Serbia when the Russian army crossed the Danube.⁶²⁶ Russians were able to identify collaborators from different sections of the Ottoman society. In Istanbul, Baron Alexandre Paul Delesnor (?), a Wallachian aristocrat, was accused of spying for Russia. Interestingly, his application for assistance to the Ottoman *zaptiye* to find two high-ranking Russian spies who were suspected of being in Istanbul was accepted by the Ottomans. However, he soon proved to be a part of an organization that was preparing a revolt in the Balkans. He had connections with both General Gorchakov and General Orlov and acted together with others: Ciriaco Constantinu, Count Meteka, Mehanevich and Rodoslevich. Fortunately, agents of the Ottoman

⁶²⁵ E. V. Belova, “Balkanskie volontiory v Russkoi armii”, *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, vol. 9 (2006), p. 57.

⁶²⁶ Schroeder, pp. 138-139; BOA, HR.MKT 63-100.

police, Nikola Palimari, Antuan Ciriacidis and Nikola Arka, disclosed the Russian espionage activities in Istanbul.⁶²⁷

Not only the Russian army but also the Third Section (*Tret'e Otdelenie*) dispatched spies to the Ottoman territories. False passports were prepared and false addresses were given to those spies to mail the information that they collected. Merchant Konovalov, a Russian subject, and Vilenika, an Austrian subject, sent information to a predetermined false address in Odessa. Konovalov was given a Greek passport as Joachim Afanasia and was sent to Greece, and Vilenika via Vienna and Trieste arrived at Istanbul.⁶²⁸ Marko Grimberg, a Jew and a resident of Babadağ, worked as a Russian agent in Dobruja and was given the right to relocate to Bessarabia after the Russian troops crossed back over the Danube River.⁶²⁹ A Greek spy sent by the Third Section served in Tulça in May 1853.⁶³⁰ Denkoğlu, a merchant, dispatched information that he acquired from Vienna by way of the Mihalkovich brothers and Georgiy Simyonov.⁶³¹

Baron Delesnor was not the only person to work for both sides. The above-mentioned Andruška was first assigned by the Ottomans to collect information on the left bank of the Danube. During his trial, he defended himself by saying that he was caught by the Russians and forced to collaborate with them. The Russian command was warned about a certain Radovich. He was a Jewish merchant in Dobruja who pretended to be a Montenegrin and conveyed misleading reports to the Russians while in fact working for the Ottomans.⁶³² Therefore, it was difficult to determine the

⁶²⁷ BOA HR.MKT 79-48.

⁶²⁸ GARF, f.109, First Expedition, op. 29, d. 402, ch. 6, l. 1-4 and other pages.

⁶²⁹ GARF, f.109, First Expedition, op. 29, d. 421, l. 1-2.

⁶³⁰ GARF, f.109, First Expedition, op. 28, d. 170, ch. 1, l. 1-3

⁶³¹ GARF, f.109, First Expedition, op. 28, d. 170, ch. 1.

⁶³² See his reports from Tulça directed to General Lüders. RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5399, l. 353-354.

extent to which the reports and the agents were reliable. Eventually, most of the reports were products of and dispatched by disingenuous people.

All of these individuals represent the intensive espionage activities in the Ottoman territories. The Russians were by no means acting in a completely alien territory. The Russian army had contacts in the region who were prepared to collaborate. They were able to organize the Christians to discover the movements of the Ottoman forces. Although the Russians exploited Cossacks, Bulgarians and Greeks in their intelligence efforts, they were unable to provoke a popular revolt among the Balkan Christians.⁶³³ The international conjuncture did not engender an appropriate environment for a popular revolt in the Balkans.

Both powers wanted to attract the local population. Propaganda activities behind the front line were crucial to garnering the sympathy and the support of the local population for the war efforts. The ethnic and religious affiliations of people were of the highest importance both as a tool and as a target of intelligence activities. The Ottomans sought to attract the anti-Russian elements to their side. The Ottoman army utilized the local population of Wallachia and Moldavia to gather intelligence regarding the moves and plans of the Russian forces. The Ottoman propaganda even provoked an anti-Russian revolt in Little Wallachia.⁶³⁴ The Ottoman counterintelligence might also have been effective in the Balkans. For instance, according to an Ottoman report, “Rano from Filibe, who will wander in these lands [Filibi, Pazarcık and Sofia] to nullify intrigues and provocations ...”.⁶³⁵ The Ottoman agents were active in the cities where military quarters were located and

⁶³³ BOA, A.MKT.UM 151-39; 151-95.

⁶³⁴ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5429, l. 237.

⁶³⁵ “İbtal-i asâr-i fesad ve tahrikâtu için bu havâlide dolaştırılmak üzere Filibeli Rano’nun ...” BOA İ.HR 105-5143.

where armed forces were deployed. They were also employed at the Greek borders, in Serbia and in Istanbul to disclose and to avert the activities of the Russian spies.⁶³⁶

6.1.5 Nature and Content of Secret Reports

“According to information received from agents” was the most common expression to initiate a report.⁶³⁷ The various written or oral information was compiled to form a compact report. The agents generally included the sources of intelligence in their statements to emphasize the authenticity of the information: “I have heard from our friend Karabet, who is a merchant and a Russian subject”, “a trustworthy merchant” or “a person who can be trusted” were some common phrases in the introductory portions of the intelligence letters.⁶³⁸

Both the Ottomans and the Russians tried to learn more about the geographical peculiarities of the front, manpower, health, provisional conditions and allocation of the enemy forces, as well as the plans and strategies of the opponent. Topographical information was given priority in the summer of 1853. In addition to the activities of the enemy armies, the peculiarities of the terrain and the local population were at the center of military intelligence. Both armies were familiar with the theater of war, i.e., Bessarabia, the Principalities, Bulgaria, Rumelia, and other possible scenes of action. These regions had been battlefields between the two powers since the beginning of the 18th century. The seasonal changes of the Danube River were of utmost importance in understanding the military activities of the enemy troops in the

⁶³⁶ BOA, A.MKT.NZD 110-77; A.MKT.UM 155-77; A.AMD 70-94; HR.MKT 63-100.

⁶³⁷ In Turkish, “tahkikat memurlarından alınan havâdise göre” and in Russian, “Po svedeniem ot lazutchikov”.

⁶³⁸ “Rusya tebaasından dostumuz olan Karabet bazergândan işittim”; “Doğru söyler bir bezirgân demiş”; “Söziñe itimat olunur birisi...”.

Balkans. Therefore, commanders along the Danube informed the central command regarding preparations of the enemy troops and the possibility of their passage across the river. Changes in the depth and width of the Danube as well as the conditions of the islets were constantly reported.⁶³⁹ The Prut and the Seret Rivers were also the subject of reports, especially at the very time when the Russians concentrated their troops in Bessarabia to invade the Principalities in May-June 1853 and when the Ottoman army was planning an operation targeting Bessarabia in the summer of 1854.⁶⁴⁰

The intelligence efforts principally aimed to learn about the activities of the enemy in advance. The most important question for the Ottomans and Russians was whether the enemy troops would cross the Danube: when, at which point, with how many troops, and for what purpose. Therefore, one of the important subjects of the reports was the position of the enemy's pontoon bridges.⁶⁴¹ The preparation of boats, wood or other necessary materials for pontoon bridges was carefully observed. Moreover, the number of enemy troops and their every activity near the possible points of passage were constantly reported by the informers.

The ethnic, religious and cultural peculiarities of the region as well as of the enemy troops were important subjects according to the reports. Russian documents always refer to the European elements of the Ottoman army, as well as to the ethnic origins of the soldiers and the commanders. The Polish, Hungarian, Cossack, Albanian elements were always emphasized, and frequently exaggerated, in the

⁶³⁹ Before crossing the Danube in the first months of 1854, the Russian troops collected detailed information about the convenient points of passage. RGVIA, Commander of the Fifth Army to War Minister, 16 [28] December 1853, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5443, l. 5.

⁶⁴⁰ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5443, l. 152-170.

⁶⁴¹ See, for example, RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5399, l. 336, 353.

secret Russian reports.⁶⁴² A certain informer claimed, "...a Polish legion of 200 men and a Hungarian battalion crossed [the river] from Vidin to Kalafat while Italian renegades of 250 men were left in the [Vidin] fortress"⁶⁴³ This dispatch obviously overstated the revolutionary elements in the Ottoman army. Perhaps such reports were used to attract Austria to the Russian side. The Italian revolutionary Apoloni, the Polish renegade Antoni Aleksandr Illinskii (Mehmed İskender Bey), and the famous Polish romantic author Michał Czajkowski (Mehmed Sadık Paşa) were some of the names frequently encountered in the intelligence reports. Some reports revealed the Slavic elements in the Ottoman army who could perhaps be utilized by the Russians. As an agent asserted, "some 35,000 Turkish forces, in which there are many Lipovans [Nekrasov Cossacks] and volunteers, entered Wallachia from Siliștre".⁶⁴⁴ The reports also described the differences and potential discrepancies among the Ottoman armed forces: "On the 4th [16th] of this month [October] after the parade oath-taking ceremony took place for the regular forces and Tatars [in Tulça], but not for Albanians and Nekrasov Cossacks".⁶⁴⁵ Such reports might have been used to understand the loyalty and discipline in the Ottoman forces and for determining the weakest sections of the Ottoman forces in terms of commitment to the cause. Ottomans, in turn, showed their interest in the Muslim elements in the Russian army.⁶⁴⁶ Ottoman spies also investigated possible future acts and the conduct of the local population, particularly the non-Muslims.⁶⁴⁷

Intelligence reports explicitly depicted, and perhaps exaggerated, the weakness of the enemy forces. The Russian spies argued, "these forces are very poorly dressed

⁶⁴² See, for example, RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5415, various papers.

⁶⁴³ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5429, l. 54.

⁶⁴⁴ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5443, l. 179 ob.

⁶⁴⁵ RGVIA, General Lüders to General Gorchakov, 9 [21] October 1853, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5399, l. 336.

⁶⁴⁶ "[T]wo hundred Circassians and some Tatars also arrived in Yergöğü." ATASE, k. 8, d. 3, f. 18-2.

⁶⁴⁷ BOA A.MKT.NZD 112-108; A.MKT.NZD 139-2; A.MKT.NZD 114-107.

and suffer from insufficient food”.⁶⁴⁸ In another report, it was claimed that, “in Silistre there is insufficient bread, food prices increased extremely; death rate is high..”.⁶⁴⁹ An Ottoman document argued that “there are more than 30,000 newly enlisted soldiers in the Russian army who do not have any kind of training and even are devoid of weapons”.⁶⁵⁰ The spies might have exaggerated the weaknesses of the enemy, thinking they would be better rewarded in exchange for good news.

Although the above-mentioned spies and their activities demonstrate a high level of information gathering, the contemporary witnesses drew a gloomy picture of the quality of their own espionage efforts. Doctor Sandwith complained that the Russian spy service was much better than the Ottomans: “the spy-service, like every other branch of the Russian army, was complete; and the Armenians of Kars furnished them with all the information required, of the state of the Turkish army”.⁶⁵¹ He further claimed, “we have no trustworthy spies whatever; the few peasants who bring us information are more than suspected, while the Armenians of the country are devoted to the enemy’s interests”.⁶⁵² Captain Lintorn Simmons, British commissioner to the Ottoman Headquarters in the Balkans, was also pessimistic. He complained that Ömer Pasha’s intelligence on the Russian movements and order of battle was “chiefly obtained from newspapers”.⁶⁵³ Ushakov seems to be aware of the overestimation of the allied command regarding the Russian espionage: “Marshal Saint-Arnaud thought ... that our agents were many, and they were almost under each and every stone”. He remarked that “it was [actually] difficult for us to attain

⁶⁴⁸ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5429, l. 98.

⁶⁴⁹ RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5443, l. 101.

⁶⁵⁰ BOA I.HR 103-5044.

⁶⁵¹ Sandwith, p. 127.

⁶⁵² Ibid, p. 258.

⁶⁵³ Harris, pp. 1-25. The author describes the reports of Simmons as full of erroneous and misleading information and thus unsatisfactory.

trusted information regarding the state of affairs and the preparations of the Anglo-French troops".⁶⁵⁴

The failures in supplying the armies and at scenes of battle in many cases emanated from inadequate intelligence efforts. For this reason, contemporary witnesses drew gloomy pictures of their own information gathering activities while exaggerating the success of their opponent. There was also a myth concerning Ottoman agents' activities in the Caucasus.⁶⁵⁵ According to the Russians, the Ottomans were covertly organizing all of the Caucasians' efforts against the Russian Empire.

It is clear that Russia was much better prepared than the Ottomans for a possible war in terms of information-gathering. Russia had the advantage if its army had moved quickly in the summer of 1853.⁶⁵⁶ However, given the static nature of the conflict, the Ottomans had sufficient time to formulate their plans and strategies for the Danube theater. The Ottoman army also pressed its territorial advantage. The Ottoman commanders knew the territory and the people better than their adversaries. Moreover, the theater of war was distant from the Russian capital, posing a disadvantage in terms of logistics and intelligence.

6.1.6 Assessing Information

During the Crimean War, the headquarters served as the central body for collecting information. Both the Russian and the Ottoman armies had the personnel

⁶⁵⁴ Ushakov, p. 122.

⁶⁵⁵ "Secret Turkish agents among the Circassians with the titles of Serasker [*sic*] Pasha" Ushakov, p. 27.

⁶⁵⁶ Ömer Pasha admitted that if Russia had wanted a war in the summer of 1853, the Ottomans would have been caught unprepared and most probably have been defeated. ATASE, k. 4, d. 11, f. 8.

to gather information but not to assess it. Gathering information was of little use unless it was also evaluated and analyzed. Therefore, it is important to determine whether the army commanders succeeded in evaluating the strategic information.

In the Balkan theater of the Crimean War, there must have been a massive accumulation of information, which might have assisted the commanders in determining the capacity of the enemy forces and formulating their own strategies. Yet, the quantity of reports could affect the quality of intelligence only if they were cross-checked. In other words, if the information was not sorted and analyzed, it would not be useful. The target proved to be quantity of information rather than the quality. Reports were generally as lengthy as possible, and all types of gossip were included. There was hardly any system of separating the useful and reliable information from the flawed or trivial. Colonel Brynza or Colonel İslam Bey may have been talented men to make use of agents in the region as well as to avert the intelligence activities of the enemy; however, they did not act as an intelligence bureau. Instead, both the Ottomans and the Russians employed traditional ways of spying and gathering information without any systematic way to assess them.

How many of these reports provided useful and correct information can only be understood after a careful comparison of what they said with what really happened. The battles at the Danubian front might be regarded as a positive sign of the Ottoman army's acquisition or utilization of information. To compare the intelligence activities of the two armies, we can analyze three strategic moves of the Ottomans in the field: the battles of Kalafat, Olteniçe and Çatana. In all of these cases, the Russians were misinformed about the Ottoman strength and strategy and failed to understand the nature of the assaults and the aim of the enemy; thus, they were

caught unprepared. These Russian failures might also be a result of counter-intelligence activities and the caution of the Ottoman command under Ömer Lütfi Pasha. He often did not disclose his strategies even to his own circle until the moment of the operation. The Russians failed at the Silistre fortress when they raised the siege after 40 days. Having assumed that the fortress would fall within a few weeks, they obviously underestimated its strength. The Ottoman concerns about a Russian assault on Vidin also proved to be exaggerated. The Russians never prepared such an offensive in wartime so as not to damage the country's relations with Austria. Such Ottoman considerations must be based on previous experiences or logical judgments rather than on wartime intelligence.

6.1.7. Conclusion

Documents demonstrate that there was a constant flow of information concerning the potential, power, and possible plans of the enemy. The political environment made diplomatic and economic transactions in Bulgaria and the Principalities possible and thus limited the capability of both sides to avert spying activities. The heterogeneous character of the population of the Danube made it easy to find people disposed to collaborate. The Ottomans were primarily in search of information from their own territory and people. While the Russians were searching for information in a foreign country, their previous information regarding the territory and their established contacts with the local population made the geography sufficiently familiar. However, the Ottomans were in an advantageous position at the beginning of the hostilities when the war was taking place in its own territory. The international position of the Russian and the Ottoman governments favored the latter

as well. The Russians were perceived as the offensive party, while the Ottomans were defending their own rights and territory.

Information regarding the terrain, the local population and the enemy troops were the principal targets of surveillance in the Balkans. The Ottomans seemed to have no difficulty in finding and employing spies at the Danubian front. The heterogeneous character of the population increased the possibility of finding and conveying information to and from the Ottomans. The gradual professionalism of the Russian espionage networks that were established and utilized by its central government organs, i.e., the ministry of war, the ministry of foreign affairs and the secret police, is also obvious. The Russians had an established network on the Ottoman soil prior to the Crimean War. The Russian enlargement strategies toward the Ottoman Empire necessitated the collection of every type of intelligence about the Ottoman political, social, economic and military structure and well-being. It was not only conducted by the Russian embassy and its agents but also by the Russian War Ministry, that is, military agents in Istanbul. Russian military agents posted very detailed reports that included topographical, ethnographical, and statistical information. The Ottoman military reformation and the defense system of Istanbul were intensively reported to St. Petersburg. Such reports were possibly products of trusted informers in strategic positions in the Ottoman capital. Although the Russian army was unable to utilize pre-war information in this case, better-organized information-gathering and processing in the 1870s was to help the Russians to arrive at the gates of Istanbul.

6.2. Prisoners of War

The aim of this chapter is to describe the experiences of the Russian prisoners of war (POW) in the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman prisoners held in Russia during the Crimean War. As the prisoners of war from different theaters shared similar experiences, it is not possible to confine the story to those who were captured on the Danubian front. Thus, although there will be some emphasis on prisoners from the Danubian front, the narrative is a general one.

As mentioned in previous chapters, diplomatic activities and peace initiatives never ceased during the war. In such circumstances, it can be claimed that the prisoners of the Crimean War were in many respects more fortunate than prisoners in previous wars. The Russian official correspondences showed that the POWs were well treated. The published reminiscences of the POWs themselves supported this argument. The Porte also exhibited benevolence in line with the European practice, but it is difficult to argue that the Russian prisoners were always welcomed by Ottoman society.

6.2.1. Ottoman and Allied Prisoners of War in Russia

6.2.1.1. Prisoners of War under Russian Law

By the 18th century, thanks to the progress of diplomacy and international law, prisoners of war in Russia received better treatment than they had before. Prisoners of war were no longer considered slaves. They were supplied with food and clothing,

and remaining in Russia was voluntary.⁶⁵⁷ The emancipation of POWs without ransom or any sort of obligation was accepted a general rule in the Russo-Ottoman treaties.⁶⁵⁸ However, it would be overly optimistic to imagine that all regulations were scrupulously applied in all circumstances. The Ottoman ambassadors to St. Petersburg claimed that Muslim POWs were forcibly converted to Christianity.⁶⁵⁹

By the 19th century, the notion of the POW was clarified by more detailed rules and regulations. During the Napoleonic Wars and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-12, as previously, various rules were issued regarding the treatment of the POWs. During the war of 1828-29, a detailed statute (*polozhenie o plennykh*) was prepared for the first time in Russia.⁶⁶⁰ The statutes issued during the Crimean War and the War of 1877-78 were somewhat revised versions of the 1829 statute. In the mid-19th century, the treatment of POWs remained unsystematic as international humanitarian law was in its infancy. Nevertheless, there was a legal text that clarified nearly every aspect pertaining to imprisonment in Russia.

At the outset of the Crimean War, the War Ministry had asked the Russian Foreign Ministry how to treat prisoners in accordance with European law. The letter drafted in response, including numerous quotations from international jurists, and a clear understanding of POW status was advanced, "... today the essence of captivity in war is restricting the independence [of the POW] to prevent his return to the rival

⁶⁵⁷ See, various articles in *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Hereafter PSZ) regarding the POWs of the Russo-Ottoman wars of 1736-39, 1768-74 and 1787-92. 1st series, vol. XI 8030, 8434, 8435; vol. XIX 13450, 13839, 14095; vol. XX 14238, 14444; vol. XXI 15263; vol. XXII 16176; vol. XXIII 17023.

⁶⁵⁸ *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi*, vol III, part 5 (Ankara, 1971), pp. 311-312. The 13th century is erroneously cited instead of the 18th.

⁶⁵⁹ Şehdi Osman Efendi, ambassador to the Russian capital from 1757 to 1758, and Abdülkerim Pasha, ambassador to St. Petersburg from 1775 to 1776, sought the return of the Ottoman prisoners, but the Russians refused the Ottoman demands claiming that the Ottoman prisoners had all voluntarily accepted Christianity. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnâmeleri*, 4th edition (Ankara, 2008), pp. 107-111, 129-132.

⁶⁶⁰ PSZ, 2nd series, vol. IV (1829), 2977.

country and his continuing participation in the war".⁶⁶¹ The Russian government attempted to follow European understanding and practice on the matter, and the relevant regulations were thus issued.

In the first months of the Crimean War, before the preparation of the new statute, certain arrangements were already put into practice. One of them was the order of Mikhail Gorchakov, in which the Russian commander-in-chief described the rations to be given to the prisoners when they were in Russian quarters and in transit to Russia's borders.⁶⁶² Vasily Dolgorukov, the War Minister, also issued an order explaining the rules pertaining to the transit of prisoners into the Russian interior.⁶⁶³ By December 1853, when it was already obvious that there would be no rapid conclusion to the war, a commission was founded to prepare the new statute. The statute was finalized by 29 March 1854 and printed as a booklet on 26 April.⁶⁶⁴ General Aleksandr Andreyevich Katenin, who was the head of the commission, assumed the responsibility to ensure the application of the new rules. Subsequently, when Britain and France declared war on Russia, new arrangements would also be issued regarding the treatment of French and British prisoners of war.

The statute was composed of 46 articles in 4 chapters: definition of the term POW; the transfer of POWs to Russian cities; their pay, rations and accommodations; and general rules. The POWs were divided into two categories:

⁶⁶¹ RGVIA, f. 1, op. 1, tom 7, d. 21249, l. 37 as quoted in Milovidov, "Inostrannyе voennoplennyе i rossiiskoe obshchestvo v gody Krymskoi voyny", p. 29.

⁶⁶² "The Order to the 3rd, 4th and 5th Armies. The Quarters at Bucharest", 20 December 1853[1 January 1854], RGVIA, f. 9196, op. 4-257, d. 4, l. 254.

⁶⁶³ Knyaz Dolgorukov to the Commander of the Gendarmerie, 22 December 1853 [3 January 1854], GARF, f. 109, op. 359 ch. 1, l. 7-8ob.; Knyaz Dolgorukov to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 22 December 1853 [3 January 1854], Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv [Russian State History Archive], St. Petersburg (hereafter RGIA), f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 18-19.

⁶⁶⁴ Knyaz Dolgorukov to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 22 December 1853 [3 January 1854], RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 29; PSZ, 2nd series, vol. XXIX (1854) 28038, pp. 261-268; *Polozhenie o plennykh* (St. Petersburg, 1854).

voluntarily surrendered deserters and captured soldiers. Foreigners assigned to the Ottoman forces were included in the first category, even if they were noncombatants. The prisoners were also divided into four groups in line with the Russian military hierarchy: *nizhnie chiny* (ranks and file), *ober-ofitsers* (corporal to captain), *shtab-ofitsers* (lieutenant to colonel), generals (pashas and higher ranks). The pay, rations, and accommodations of the POWs were unsurprisingly commensurate to the prisoner's rank.

The statute divided the captives into three groups. The prisoners of war who were first concentrated in the quarters would be sent to the headquarters together with a detailed register. The registers included the prisoner's name, religion, nationality, unit, rank, and the location and battle where they were captured. A copy of the register would also be sent to the Inspector Department of the War Ministry. According to the statute, the belongings of prisoners, which had been taken, would be held throughout the war.⁶⁶⁵ Every fifty prisoners would select an elder to preserve the tranquility of the group during the journey into the Russian interior. When they were transported in territory encircled by enemy forces, a translator would also be employed to maintain improved communication between the prisoners and the guards.⁶⁶⁶ In this manner, the prisoners were transferred to Russian borders (Reni, Leova and Skuliani on the river Dniester) and placed into quarantine.⁶⁶⁷

The reception of the POWs at the Russian frontier and subsequent transfer to the towns where they would be imprisoned constitute the second stage. Tatar

⁶⁶⁵ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, articles 4. However, some prisoners' belongings were stolen during the war. Royer, pp. 17-18.

⁶⁶⁶ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, articles 9 and 10.

⁶⁶⁷ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, articles 8, 12 - 20.

translators would also be brought on the journey.⁶⁶⁸ The prisoners would rest in houses or prisons on their way. The high-ranking officers, who advanced in small groups in carts, were lightly guarded and were permitted to rest in the houses of local notables.⁶⁶⁹ After the long and difficult journey, the prisoners finally arrived at the towns where they would be held either until the end of the war or, if they were fortunate enough, until the conclusion of a prisoner exchange agreement.

Throughout their captivity, the POWs were under the surveillance and control of three pillars of the Russian State: the War Ministry, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Secret Police. These institutions, at least in theory, regularly informed each other about the prisoners. The Ministry of War was the first institution to learn of the prisoners from the front.⁶⁷⁰ While the governors of the provinces would be informed of new visitors in advance, they, in turn, were required to send regular reports to the Inspector Department of the War Ministry each month.⁶⁷¹ The Russian government clearly took pains to ensure that rules were properly obeyed. Thus, the Russian government did not attempt to merely control the prisoners but also those who were responsible for them. There was a common understanding in Russia that “the prisoner is state property” and “someone will have to answer for anything unpleasant that happens to prisoners”. This understanding was the best guarantee for the POWs against any misbehavior on the part of Russian officials.⁶⁷² Therefore, such expressions as “I will send a letter to St. Petersburg” or “I will complain to the Tsar” could often resolve the prisoners’ problems.⁶⁷³ Yet many unexpected issues

⁶⁶⁸ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 21.

⁶⁶⁹ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 7 and 21.

⁶⁷⁰ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 5.

⁶⁷¹ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 38.

⁶⁷² Milovidov, “Inostrannye voennoplennye i rossiiskoe obshchestvo v gody Krymskoi voiny”, p. 159.

⁶⁷³ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, pp. 131-133, 152.

may have arisen in Russia, where transportation and communication was insufficient and misunderstandings or misconduct could only be addressed after a long delay.

Other articles of the statute and their practice/malpractice will be highlighted in the relevant sections of the chapter.

6.2.1.2. The Number of Prisoners of War during the Crimean War

The Russian army, which was by and large on the defensive, could capture only a limited number of prisoners, with the exception of those who were taken at the Caucasus front. On the Danubian front, the Ottomans generally emerged victorious, such as at the battles of Olteniçe, Çatana and Yergögü. Many of the Ottoman soldiers were taken prisoner at Dobruja during the passage of the Russian army over the Danube River. Other prisoners were seized during the reconnaissance activities of the Russian Cossacks. The Russians were rarely successful in the battles on the Crimean peninsula, i.e., Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman, Gözleve and Chernaya. They captured only a small number of enemy soldiers in the outpost duties in Sevastopol. However, the Caucasus front presented a different record, as Russian success on the battlefields and the capitulation of the fortress of Kars delivered thousands of Ottoman soldiers into the hands of the Russian army.

As the POWs, who were captured on different fronts, were sent to the Russian interior through different routes, and importantly, the belligerents supported the exchange of prisoners during wartime, it is difficult to determine specific numbers of the POWs. However, the most reliable data can be found in the surveys of the Inspector Department of the War Ministry. According to records from 1856,

throughout the war, the Russian army captured 47 British officers and 595 soldiers, 72 French officers and 1353 soldiers, and 4 Sardinian officers and 63 soldiers. According to the same records, the number of the Ottoman POWs was incomparably higher, reaching a total number of 958 officers and 11,431 soldiers.⁶⁷⁴

Most of the Ottoman POWs were captured in the Caucasus; approximately 8000 were the defenders of Kars and the rest had participated in the battles of Ahiska, Başgedikler and Kürekdere.⁶⁷⁵ Only approximately 400 soldiers fell into Russian hands on the Danubian front.⁶⁷⁶ Approximately 300 Ottoman sailors were captured in naval battles. The number of Ottoman POWs captured on the Crimean peninsula is unclear. Because the Ottoman troops did not actively participate in allied efforts, especially after the battle of Balaklava, and only served in secondary roles, the Ottoman prisoners were likely to be small in number and much fewer than the French and British prisoners.

Those returning home via Odessa included 832 Ottoman officers and 9146 soldiers, while 127 officers and 1800 soldiers lost their lives in Russia.⁶⁷⁷ The number of Ottoman casualties in the Russian captivity was nearly equal to the total number of British, French, and Sardinian POWs, demonstrating the gravity of the human loss in the Ottoman ranks. Moreover, the Ottomans once again lost a substantial number of men in captivity as during previous wars with Russia for the

⁶⁷⁴ This record does not include certain high-ranking officers such as Vice Admiral Osman Pasha and General William Fenwick Williams. RGVIA, f. 395, op. 325, d. 40, l. 127-129 as quoted in Milovidov, “Inostrannye voennoplennye i rossiiskoe obshchestvo v gody Krymskoi voiny”, p. 154.

⁶⁷⁵ Muravyov, vol. II, p. 224; “General Williams to Clarendon, 29 November 1855, Kars”, *Papers Relative to Military Affairs in Asiatic Turkey, and Defence and Capitulation of Kars* (London, 1856), pp. 340-341.

⁶⁷⁶ RGVIA, f. 9196, op. 4-257, d. 1, l. 1-50. This list does not include deserters. They were 380 men, of which 10 were officers. There might be another register for deserters.

⁶⁷⁷ Milovidov, “Inostrannye voennoplennye i rossiiskoe obshchestvo v gody Krymskoi voiny”, p. 154.

Russians never possessed the logistical capacity to supply health care, food and clothing to thousands of Ottoman prisoners.

The Russians, however, lost approximately 8000 men and women (both soldiers and civilians) as prisoners, most of whom were captured after amphibious operations. The Russian soldiers captured in the Crimea were first brought to Istanbul to be treated. Later, they were sent either to Britain or France. However, the number of prisoners who were detained at Istanbul for some time was not negligible. In the summer of 1855, there were approximately 3500 Russian soldiers on the island of Büyükada (Prinkipo) alone. Russian soldiers captured by the Ottoman army were held at the Imperial Shipyard in the Golden Horn or at the state farm in Kütahya.⁶⁷⁸

6.2.1.3. The Nature and Phases of Captivity during the Crimean War

The first soldiers to fall into Russian hands were those who fought on the Danubian and Caucasian fronts, but a long journey awaited them before they would arrive at their places of exile. The first guests of the Russian towns were the prisoners captured in naval engagements on the Black Sea.

In November 1853, the Russian Black Sea Fleet was chasing Ottoman battleships. First, a small merchant steamer *Medar-i Ticaret*,⁶⁷⁹ was captured by the Russian steamer *Bessarabiya*.⁶⁸⁰ There were seven Ottoman subjects (4 Muslims and 3 Orthodox Christians), 7 Englishmen, 1 Italian and 1 Montenegrin, a total 16 men

⁶⁷⁸ BOA A.MKT.NZD 159-80, 8 Zilhicce 1271[22 August 1855]; BOA HR.MKT 96-28, 28 Rebiülevvel 1271 [19 December 1854].

⁶⁷⁹ The Russian sources claim that the steamer was used for the transportation of troops and ammunition during the war. RGADA, f. 11, op.1, d. 1257, l. 1.

⁶⁸⁰ Zverev, p. 45.

from the *Medar-i Ticaret*.⁶⁸¹ On the following day, in the first ever battle between steamers, the *Pervaz-i Bahri*, an Ottoman-Egyptian steamer with ten guns, was captured by the Russian steamer *Vladimir*, which possessed a larger crew and better guns.⁶⁸² After a three-hour battle, Said Pasha, the captain of the steamer, lost his life along with 2 other officers and 19 sailors, while 18 sailors were wounded. The Russians captured 134 men, alive and dead.⁶⁸³ The Russian Emperor renamed the *Pervaz-i Bahri* the *Kornilov* and rewarded the crew with ranks, orders and monetary prizes.⁶⁸⁴ In the early morning of 19 November, the Russian fleet and its booty was welcomed at the Sevastopol harbor by an excited crowd, but the severely damaged *Pervaz-i Bahri* sank in front of the harbor.⁶⁸⁵

Shortly after these minor fights, on 30 November, the most important encounter between the Russian and Ottoman naval forces in the Black Sea occurred. The battle of Sinop was a disaster for the Ottoman fleet. Thousands of the Ottoman sailors were killed, while many others were wounded. Only a small number of sailors

⁶⁸¹ Victor Ivanovich Baryatinskii, a Russian officer, reports the ethnic origins of the persons on the *Medar-i Ticaret*. There were two English engineers, a few Maltase, and Greeks, a Montenegrin, an Italian, Turks, and Arabs. *Vospominaniya V. I Baryatinskogo (1852-1855)* (Moscow, 1905), p. 105. Derviş, Mustafa, Ahmed, Davud and Yorgi were passengers. The crew was composed of eleven personnel. The War Minister to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 16 [28] January 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 42-42ob.

⁶⁸² Frigates under steam power played an important role in the Crimean War in terms of both logistics and battles. Baryatinskii, who was aboard the Russian steamer, summarized the battle. *Vospominaniya V. I Baryatinskogo*, pp. 46-56.

⁶⁸³ Three lieutenants, one English machinist, one Arab engineer, 3 warrant officer, one doctor, one commissar (?), one imam, one guide, 10 *yunker* (?), 5 sergeants (*unter-ofitser*), 121 sailors, 2 servants composed the crew. There were 151 men with Said Pasha. 17 sailors were probably lost during the battle. The first report of General Menshikov who was then in Sevastopol informed St. Petersburg that there were 130 prisoners. Subsequently, the the detailed reports of Admiral Nakhimov and Admiral Kornilov arrived at the Russian capital. Admiral Kornilov, who was aboard the *Vladimir* during the battle, claimed that it was not possible to obtain precise information from the prisoners concerning Ottoman casualties. Finding a Turkish speaker in the Russian army would not have been difficult, but the prisoners did not know any language other than Arabic, and hence a translator was needed. *Materialy dlya istorii Krymskoi voiny i oborony Sevastopolya*, prepared by Nikolai F. Dubrovin, vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1871), pp. 138, 143-145. Knyaz Baryatinskii expressed that the Russians and the prisoners joked with one another. *Vospominaniya V. I Baryatinskogo*, p. 54.

⁶⁸⁴ *Sobranie donezenii*, p. 30.

⁶⁸⁵ *Vospominaniya V. I Baryatinskogo*, p. 56; Marx, in his column in *New York Daily Tribune*, stated that the *Pervaz-i Bahri* sank in front of Sevastopol, but he believed that the steamer was captured in the battle of Sinop. Karl Marx, *Eastern Question*, prepared by Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling (London, 1897), pp. 223-224.

were taken prisoner and brought to Sevastopol. Patrona (Vice Admiral) Osman Pasha, commander of the Ottoman fleet, and wounded in the leg, was also among the prisoners. Colonel Ali Mahir Bey, the commander of the *Fazlullah*, and Lieutenant Colonel Ethem Bey, the captain of the *Feyz-i Bari*, Major Yalovali Hasan Bey, and Lieutenant Kasımpaşalı Halil Efendi were other captured officers.⁶⁸⁶

As a result of Russian superiority in the Black Sea, hundreds of prisoners were brought to Sevastopol. Having left the wounded prisoners in hospital, the rest were sent to Odessa on 8 December. On the following day, 298 prisoners arrived at Odessa, of whom 22 were non-Muslims. With the exception of the non-Muslim prisoners and 5 Egyptian officers, the prisoners would wait for a long time for a prisoner exchange. Moreover, the first prisoners of war in Russia from the naval powers were also sailors. The *Tiger*, a British steamer, lost its way in front of Odessa and was forced to surrender. The British sailors were more fortunate than the Ottomans, as most of them would be exchanged within a few months, while only thirty of them would be sent to the Russian interior.⁶⁸⁷

The first convoy was composed of 271 Muslim privates. These prisoners were guarded by a powerful force comprising 1 officer and 74 privates. On 2 January 1854, they left Odessa for Oryol.⁶⁸⁸ Meanwhile, small convoys were assembled for the Christian prisoners, and 7 non-Muslim Ottoman subjects were sent to Kursk, 7 British, 1 Italian, and 1 French to Kaluga, and 6 Austrians to Kiev. The places where

⁶⁸⁶ Ivan Konstantinovich Ayvazovskii, the famous Russian painter of Armenian origin, interviewed the wounded officers in Sevastopol and painted Osman Pasha and Ali Mahir Bey (his name was rendered Adil Bey on the painting). This painting was printed in *Russkii khudozhestvennyi listok. Materialy*, vol. I, p. 204; Badem, pp. 126-128. Interestingly, Nakhimov and Menshikov did not mention the number of prisoners in their reports. Dodd mistakenly claims that all of the Ottoman officers were killed during and after the battle. Dodd, p. 60.

⁶⁸⁷ The crew was composed of Captain Giffard, 24 officers and 201 sailors. Dodd, p. 114.

⁶⁸⁸ Governor of Novorossiya and Bessarabia to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 11 [23] December 1853, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 25.

the prisoners would be sent were almost certain. (These towns will be mentioned in the following section.)

There were certain routes that the prisoners would take. The prisoners taken during naval battles were initially sent to Odessa, from which they would arrive at Poltova and Kursk, and finally in the town in which they would ultimately reside. Those captured at the Danubian front would first be dispatched to Skuliani, Leova or Reni, on the Russo-Ottoman border, and then would be sent into the Russian interior.⁶⁸⁹ Prisoners who were captured in the Caucasus would arrive at Novocherkassk guarded by a Cossack *Yasaul* and via Voronezh would arrive at the towns in the north. The prisoners who were taken during the battles on the Crimean peninsula would take the road passing through Orkapı (Perekop), Melitopol and Kharkov.

At the beginning of the journey, overcoats and boots were given to the prisoners.⁶⁹⁰ The clothing of the Caucasian prisoners was completely ruined by the time they reached Voronezh. Here, new overcoats, boots and trousers were prepared for them.⁶⁹¹ Colonel Lake notes that the fur coat, boots and hats that he received were of the best quality.⁶⁹² However, not every officer enjoyed the same treatment. Knyaz Viktor Ivanovich Bariatinsky claims that he had given his own overcoat to Joseph Guilhem Lagondie, a French officer who required one.⁶⁹³ Similarly, many prisoners reported that they were left without garments and could only acquire clothing by courtesy of goodhearted people. Walsh says that the only garment they received was

⁶⁸⁹ RGVIA, f. 9196, op. 4-257, d. 4, l. 257.

⁶⁹⁰ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 32. An 1855 law described the clothing given to prisoners in detail. PSZ, 2nd series, vol. XXX (1855), 29036, pp. 155-156; *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 47.

⁶⁹¹ Gendarme Commander of the Voronezh Province to Graf Orlov, 13 [25] December 1855, GARF, f. 109, 1. expedition, d. 359 part 1, l. 22-23; Gendarme Commander of Voronezh Province to Graf Orlov, 14 [26] January 1855, GARF, f. 109, 1st expedition, d. 359 part 1, l. 24.

⁶⁹² Colonel Atwell Lake, *Kars and our Captivity in Russia* (London, 1856), p. 261.

⁶⁹³ *Vospominaniya V. I. Baryatinskogo*, p. 24.

boots and an overcoat, and only after the exchange of prisoners did they receive another overcoat and a hat.⁶⁹⁴ The lack of clothing must have been very difficult for the rank and file.

In his memoirs, Sergeant George Newman explains the journey of the prisoners through Russian lands in a most detailed fashion. Newman's convoy, which began its journey in November 1854, was not exclusively composed of British and French prisoners. The Crimean Tatars, who were accused of aiding the allied armies, were also in the convoy but faced worse conditions. These convicts were destined to go Siberia being chained their feet.⁶⁹⁵ The prisoners of war, however, with no information regarding the crimes of these individuals, were unhappy walking with the 'criminals', as they thought that this was dishonorable for soldiers.⁶⁹⁶ This convoy encountered another group of prisoners containing 100 Ottomans. These Ottoman soldiers were captured after the storm of 14 November 1854 that found them in a British vessel.⁶⁹⁷

The rank and file walked while their belongings were carried on carts. These carts were often forcefully commandeered from villages along with their drivers.⁶⁹⁸ The treatment that villagers received from Russian soldiers was not very gentle.⁶⁹⁹ The prisoners, who could advance approximately 30-40 kilometers daily, often fell sick and were left at the hospitals along the way.⁷⁰⁰ Some died in hospitals, while those who healed would join another convoy and continue on their way. The length of the prisoners' journey changed according to the durations of the stops made along

⁶⁹⁴ "A Peep behind the Scenes", p. 193.

⁶⁹⁵ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, p. 52.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 47.

⁶⁹⁷ The allied forces lost many ships and sailors in the storm. Newman gives the name of transport as *Culloden*. *Ibid*, p. 63.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 52.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 50, 52.

⁷⁰⁰ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, pp. 44, 71.

the way. For instance, the prisoners who arrived at Kharkov included a certain Ali from Mardin. He had been captured at Gümrü eight months previous, and he already had a good command of Russian before he arrived at his destination.⁷⁰¹

When they could not reach a town or village, they were billeted in the small prisons on the way. These were unclean, one story buildings with two rooms.⁷⁰² When the prisoners arrived at villages or towns, they stayed in houses in groups of four or five. Although they generally preferred the houses where they could enjoy hot meal and a bed, they were not always welcomed by the reluctant landlords.⁷⁰³

Quarrels and fights broke out among groups that proved unable to share the rooms.⁷⁰⁴ Many things, important and trivial, could instigate a fight. In one case, after a fight between Ottoman and British soldiers, the latter forced the Ottomans to walk behind them. According to the British soldiers, the cause of the fight was that the Ottoman soldiers had sat on the former's bread in the cart.⁷⁰⁵ There were also fights between the guards and the prisoners. A quarrel between Russian guards, who wanted to rest, and French prisoners, who wanted to proceed, became a significant fight. The British prisoners helped their allies, while the Ottomans watched. After this incident, 1 French and 2 British prisoners, and 7 Russian guards were injured and were carried on the carts to the next stop where they were left in a hospital.⁷⁰⁶ In some cases, Russian villagers also intervened in the fights.⁷⁰⁷ The fights took place not only along the way, but also in the towns. The major reasons for the frequent

⁷⁰¹ Ali's skill with the Russian language surprised the correspondent of *Moskovskie vedomosti*. Ali informed the correspondent about the Ottoman prisoners in Kharkov. F. Zaytsov, "Nepriyatelskie voenno-plennye v Kharkove", *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Prilozheniya*, prepared by Nikolai Putilov, vol. XXV (St. Petersburg, 1856), pp. 21-22.

⁷⁰² *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, pp. 37-38.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid*, pp. 44

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 103-104.

⁷⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 98.

⁷⁰⁶ "A Peep behind the Scenes", p. 195.

⁷⁰⁷ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, pp. 108-110.

fights were the undisciplined actions of the prisoners, the overreactions of the Russian guards, and most importantly intoxication on both sides. The Ottomans however seem to have been less prone to fight compared to their allies.

The notables of the towns showed their hospitality to the prisoners. They not only visited the prisoners, but also invited them to their homes for a meal. The wants of the prisoners were often satisfied by Russian notables, as well as German colonists and French and British nationals residing in Russia. These people brought clothes and food, and presented luxuries such as fruits, sugar, tea and tobacco. They also cared for the wounded and ill.⁷⁰⁸ The Crimean Tatars also treated the allied prisoners well. They offered their food although the Tatar food was incompatible with the Western palate. They provided some goods without asking for money, and even gave money to the prisoners.⁷⁰⁹ However, we are as yet unaware of the details of the relationship between the Ottoman prisoners and the Muslim residents of Russian towns.⁷¹⁰

In contrast to the above-mentioned hospitality, the local population was sometimes unfriendly to their guests. The Russian peasants did not receive the prisoners with the hearty provided by the Crimean Tatars. They likely perceived them as enemies of the fatherland or simply the cause of the recruitment of their sons and husbands, and hence they occasionally expressed their anger with curses and spitting.⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 36, 42, 134-138; “Pisma Frantsuzkogo ofitsera o bytnosti ego v plenu u russkikh”, *Shornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Prilozheniya*, vol. 25, p. 34; Kelly, p. 119.

⁷⁰⁹ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, p. 67.

⁷¹⁰ As will be mentioned below, the Russians were careful not to send the Ottoman prisoners to towns where there was a considerable Muslim population. Actually, the Russian government was always sensitive about the relations between the Ottoman population and the Muslims in the Caucasus and the Crimea.

⁷¹¹ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, p. 68.

The most noteworthy behavior of the Russians was curiosity. The local people, especially the women, approached the buildings where the prisoners were living and watched the free show late into the night.⁷¹² Colonel Lake described their arrival at Tbilisi: "... every window was filled, and every street crowded. Be it, however, fairly admitted, that while I never before witnessed curiosity so general and eager, there was nothing disrespectful or offensive in the conduct of the multitude which had assembled to have a good look at the English prisoners... A portion of the crowd that had followed us through the streets, remained fixed at the door, and did not disperse until nearly dark."⁷¹³ The French attracted more visitors than the Ottomans and British. The major reason was likely that the Russian notables and officers possessed a good command of French.⁷¹⁴

The comfort of the captivity varied in accordance with the rank of the prisoners. High-ranking officers travelled in carriages, received more money, and even possessed servants. The officers arrived at their destinations in a few weeks, while the privates' journey took several months.⁷¹⁵ Of course, such comfort was not always granted. The *brichka*, which was carried by six horses, was comfortable⁷¹⁶, but the *telega* - the Russian post cart - made the terrible Russian roads unendurable for many officers.⁷¹⁷ The lack of horses and carriages forced the officers to endure long waits in the Russian towns. On occasion, the officers were lodged in the prisons along the way.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹² Ibid, p.39.

⁷¹³ Lake, pp. 254-255.

⁷¹⁴ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 44.

⁷¹⁵ Colonel Richard Kelly states that they traveled from Akmescit to Ryazan in twenty-six days. Meanwhile, they rested for three days in Yekaterinoslav, three days in Kharkov, and two days in Voronezh. Kelly, p. 125.

⁷¹⁶ Lake, pp. 251-252.

⁷¹⁷ Kelly, p. 122.

⁷¹⁸ Lake, p. 252.

The officers quartered in hotels or the houses of local notables when they arrived in the towns. Some British officers stayed in Lady Razevich's house when they were in Akmesçit (Simferopol). Captain Frampton, Lieutenant Duff, Lieutenant Chadwick and Lieutenant Clowes stayed in the hotel "Peterburg" in Kharkov before they arrived at Ryazan.⁷¹⁹ The officers from Kars stayed in Karl Morigi's hotel in Tbilisi, while the hotel costs - approximately 1,000 rubles a month - were generously paid by the Russian government.⁷²⁰

Throughout the war, many convoys of prisoners passed through the Caucasian mountains, a very difficult journey. The Kars garrison likely endured the most difficult journey. The hungry and exhausted units first arrived at Gümrü and then at Tbilisi. It took hours simply to arrive at the Russian camp in the proximity of Kars in cold and snowy weather, and many prisoners perished at the outset of the journey.⁷²¹ Fortunately, the Russian army was kind and hospitable to the defenders of Kars. Colonel Lake claims, "We were better treated, however, by the Russians than by the climate."⁷²² The Russian officers wanted to learn everything about life in the Kars Fortress and insisted on offering champagne in their own tents.⁷²³

To be sure, the officers of Kars enjoyed a more comfortable captivity than the rest of the army. Colonel Lake and Captain Thompson always accepted invitations in the Russian towns and conversed and drank vodka with the landlords. Accordingly, they joined a party in Vladikavkas and paid a visit to the house of Father Andrei in a small Russian village. As the occasions arose, they watched opera and ballet

⁷¹⁹ Zaytsov, "Nepriyatelskie voenno-plennye v Kharkove", pp. 17-19.

⁷²⁰ Lake, p. 255.

⁷²¹ Ibid, p. 242.

⁷²² Ibid, p. 247.

⁷²³ Ibid, pp. 244- 245.

performances. These British officers voyaged apart from Lieutenant-General Abdülkerim Pasha, but they occasionally crossed his path.⁷²⁴

The wounded officers and sailors of the battle of Sinop were sent into exile after receiving medical treatment. In summer 1854, Osman Pasha, Ali Mahir Bey, Hasan Bey and Halil Efendi were sent to Moscow under the guard of the Dniepr reserve battalion.⁷²⁵ Ahmed Hadmiadus and Hasan Veli were assigned as their servants. These Ottoman naval officers were the highest ranking prisoners in Russia until the fall of the Kars Fortress. Therefore, the Russian government attempted to provide a comfortable journey for them.

The treatment of Polish and Hungarians in the allied armies was substantially different from that received by the other prisoners. The Hungarians and Poles who took up arms against Russia would be treated as renegades and traitors. The Austrian subjects captured on the Danubian front would be directly sent to Austria, while those who were captured in the Caucasus would be handed over to Austria after their arrival at Kiev. The Polish soldiers would be imprisoned in Kiev and tried by a military court.⁷²⁶ Therefore, the Polish officers in the Ottoman army were more cautious than their colleagues to avoid being captured by the enemy. Similarly, the Ottoman Cossacks were likely to be ill treated. Years after the Crimean War, on 27 March 1858, Mehmed Sadik Pasha forwarded a petition of the elders of the Dobruja Cossacks to the Porte, according to the which, Danila Fedorov and Feodosii Danilo had been sent to Siberia where they lived in captivity in chains. Thus, the elders

⁷²⁴ On the journey of Lake and Thompson from Tbilisi to Penza, see, *ibid*, pp. 265-311.

⁷²⁵ Ethem Bey was not among them. General Annenkov to the Minister of Internal Affairs, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 132. Colonel Ali Bey was cited as a captain in the Russian document. BOA A.DVN, 109-40. In the Russian documents, the name Hasan is rendered as Gasan according to the Russian pronunciation.

⁷²⁶ I did not encounter any Polish or Hungarian prisoners in the files that I have studied. There might be separate registers for the Polish and Hungarian prisoners.

asked the Porte for an exemption for these two Cossacks from all taxes and ground works.⁷²⁷

The most important aspect of captivity for the prisoners was likely the pay and rations that they received. According to their ranks, the prisoners received certain amounts of rations on the way to the Russian borders.⁷²⁸ If the Russian commander considered it necessary, the prisoners would also receive some money for the luxuries, such as coffee, tea, sugar and tobacco.⁷²⁹ In the statute, the allowances given in Russia were explained simply and clearly. A *shtab-ofitser* would receive 50 kopecks, an *ober-ofitser* 20 kopecks, and the privates and sailors 9 kopecks.⁷³⁰ The prisoners could now spend their money to prepare their own meals. Thus, it can be claimed that second stage of their journeys in Russia passed in better conditions than the first. Nonetheless, these allowances were less than both what had been given in the previous Russo-Ottoman War and what would be given to the allied French and British soldiers during the Crimean War. According to another rule adopted in October 1854, a French or British private would receive 20 kopecks daily, an *ober-ofitser* 75 kopecks, and a *shtab-ofitser* 150 kopecks.⁷³¹ The European soldiers received three times higher pay than what was determined in the Statute. Apparently, the costs of the Europeans were considered to be higher than those of the Ottomans. Perhaps because of their small numbers they could be paid more than the Ottomans.

⁷²⁷ “Ocherk istorii staroobryadtsev v Dobrudzhe. Prilozheniya”, *Slavyanskii sbornik*, vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1875, p. 620.

⁷²⁸ An Ottoman private would receive a 1 3/4 pound biscuit or 3 pounds of bread, a quarter pound of wheat, 5 zolotinok of salt and half a pound of meat. An *Ober-ofitser*, a *shtab-ofitser* and pashas would receive one pound of meat. If one of these products were insufficient, then another one would be given. *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 26.

1 pound = 96 zolotinok ≈ 409 grams

⁷²⁹ The privates would receive 1,5 kopecks, an *ober-ofitser* or a foreign officers 6 kopecks, a *shtab-ofitser* or a foreign doctor 12 kopecks and pashas would receive 24 kopecks. *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 27. Those prisoners who were sent by sea would receive rations according to the statute for Russian sailors. *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 30.

⁷³⁰ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 31.

⁷³¹ PSZ, 2nd series, vol. XXIX, 28611a, 8 October 1854.

Whatever the reason, the adoption of a new rule for the allowances of the French and British soldiers is meaningful to understand the differing Russian perceptions of the Ottomans and the Europeans.

Prior to the adoption of this rule, some arrangements had already been made. Lieutenant Royer, one of the first British prisoners of war, explained the motivation for and necessity of these arrangements:

The Government had, in the first instance, to find a person who would contract to furnish the necessary rations to the men; but as the Government allowance for prisoners was calculated on a scale adapted only to satisfy Turks, it was insufficient for the artificial wants of more civilized beings. On the first evening the men had only wine and bread, both of which however were served out in sufficient abundance and of excellent quality. The table of the officers was more liberally supplied with meat and vegetables.⁷³²

Royer believes that, after the increase in their rations, the Russians provided them with meat, soup and bread. He attests that although the pay increased from 15 to 50 kopecks for the officers and 25 kopecks for the sailors.⁷³³ Another British prisoner, Sergeant Walsh, argues that their pay increased in response to the demands of the British government.⁷³⁴

The pay of the European prisoners was a good amount in Russia, where food was cheap. This money was not only enough for food but also spirits – one of the basic sources of their happiness. However, it will be optimistic to argue that the prisoners were always treated in line with the regulations. The British prisoners in Akmesçit received just a quarter pound of meat, some potatoes and onions, and one pound of bread instead of cash. What is worse, some of their rations were stolen by

⁷³² Royer, pp. 24-25.

⁷³³ Ibid, p. 25.

⁷³⁴ “A Peep behind the Scenes”, p. 194.

the Russian cook. The British prisoners complained to the authorities.⁷³⁵ The animals of the peasants, especially the Crimean Tatars, were bought for small sums, and the rations of the prisoners were supplied as such.⁷³⁶ Thus the Russian soldiers found a way of making extra money. Similarly, in the Russian cities the pay was given late, or not given at all.⁷³⁷ To be sure, the Ottoman prisoners faced similar or worse injustices than the European prisoners experienced. The Ottoman prisoners, who received less pay than their allies, would likely have faced significant difficulties when they could not receive this money.

The prisoners arrived at their destinations after several months of travel. The provinces where the prisoners were sent were all located in central Russia.⁷³⁸ The aim was to keep the prisoners far from the front, and easily control them. The prisoners were also intended to live among a population that was devoted to the Russian government, and the negative perceptions of the local population should be limited.⁷³⁹ Therefore, the provinces were far from the frontiers and predominantly populated by Russians and thus were safe and controllable. It can be underlined that there was an endeavor to prevent any meetings between Ottoman prisoners and Russian Muslims. Accordingly, when it was necessary to select new towns for the accommodation of Ottoman prisoners, the Russian Interior Ministry, War Ministry and Directorate of

⁷³⁵ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 42.

⁷³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 66.

⁷³⁷ “A Peep behind the Scenes”, p. 199; *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 53.

⁷³⁸ In the Russo-Ottoman War of 1806-12, the Ottoman prisoners were kept in Voronezh, Yekaterinoslav, Poltava, Tambov, Kharkov and Kherson provinces. Thus, they were allocated in the southern provinces of Russia into a wide geography. In the war of 1828-29, the prisoners were planned to be sent to the provinces of Volynskaya, Vilenskaya, Minskaya and Grodzenskaya in the west of Russia to work in the forced labor while only the sick and the elder ones should be sent into the central Russia. PSZ, 2nd series, vol. IV (1829), 2977, article 38. However, the prisoners were sent just to the provinces of Kiev and Minsk. In the war of 1877-78, about 70,000 Ottoman prisoners were distributed into forty Russian provinces. Poznakhirev, “Kurskaya guberniya i Turetskie voennoplennye voin XIX veka”, p. 153.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid*.

Communication and State Buildings updated each other.⁷⁴⁰ Accordingly, no prisoners were sent to the towns on the Volga basin. There were no prisoners held in the southern cities of Russia, such as Minsk and Kharkov, most likely because it would have been easier to escape.

As new states declared war on Russia as the war continued the number of prisoners in Russia and the number of towns hosting the prisoners increased. Although there were only a few provinces mentioned in the Statute, more than ten Russian provinces hosted prisoners. At the beginning of the war, all Muslim prisoners were intended to be held in Oryol, and later it was considered more appropriate to hold the officers separately in another town, Tula.⁷⁴¹ The Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire were to be accommodated in Kursk. The Europeans commissioned in the Ottoman army would be sent to Kaluga and Ryazan. The officers and the privates would live separately in one town.⁷⁴² However, all of these arrangements would change in time. When the French and British Empires declared war on Russia, it was decided that the British officers would be sent to Ryazan, privates to Voronezh, the French officers to Kaluga and the privates to Tambov. The soldiers commissioned in the French and British armies but who were of other nationalities would be sent to Kostroma. The Sardinians, who were the last to declare war, would also be sent to Kostroma.⁷⁴³

The host towns continued to change during the war. The Ottoman privates who were in Oryol were sent to neighboring towns in the summer of 1854. According to

⁷⁴⁰ General Katenin to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 14 [26] August 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 149ob.

⁷⁴¹ Dolgorukov to the Gendarme Commander Graf Orlov, 24 November [6 December] 1853, GARF, f. 109, 1. expedition, d. 359 part 1, l. 1; Dolgorukov to Gendarme Commander Graf Orlov, 12 [24] December 1853, GARF, f. 109, 1. expedition, d. 359 part 1, l. 3.

⁷⁴² *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 23.

⁷⁴³ The Minister of Internal Affairs General Bibikov to Governors of Provinces, 17 (29) July 1855, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 572.

this new arrangement, 100 men were left in Oryol, while 70 were placed in Smolensk, 65 in Penza, 65 in Yaroslavl, 65 in Kursk, 65 in Vladimir and 70 in Tambov.⁷⁴⁴ After the arrival of the prisoners of the Caucasian battles, the number of prisoners in the Russian interior increased dramatically. The allocation of prisoners in the summer of 1855 was as such: the officers were accommodated in Tula, while the privates were sent to various towns in the provinces of Oryol, Smolensk, Yaroslavl, Kursk, Vladimir, and Vologda.⁷⁴⁵ When the Paris Peace Treaty was signed, the distribution of the Ottoman prisoners was as such: in Orlov 436, in Kursk 281, in Vologda 202, in Penza 194, in Yaroslavl 184, in Vladimir 168, in Smolensk 69, in Tula 69. The prisoners of Kars were not included in these numbers.⁷⁴⁶

As mentioned above, the officers were accommodated in Tula, Kaluga, and Ryazan, towns that are near Moscow. The accommodations of Pashas were not clarified. When necessary, the War Ministry would determine a convenient town.⁷⁴⁷ Vice-Admiral Osman Pasha, Colonel Ali Mahir Bey, and Major Yalovalı Hasan Bey, who were captured during the battle of Sinop, and Hafiz Pasha and Abdülkerim Pasha who were captured after the capitulation of Kars Fortress were sent to Moscow. Vasif Pasha, who was ill, was left in Tbilisi. The famous British commander of Kars, General Williams, and his lieutenant Teesdale and Secretary Churchill were sent to Ryazan, while Colonel Lake and Captain Thompson were dispatched to Penza. Lake and Thomson lived in Penza until the peace treaty.

⁷⁴⁴ General Katenin to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 14 [26] August 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 149. There was also a plan of leaving hundred prisoners in Oryol while allocating the rest of them as such: Kaluga 50, Yaroslavsk 25, Vladimir 25, Nizhniy Novgorod 75, Simbirsk 50, Tula 50, Kursk 50, and Ryazan 75. Apparently, this plan was later subjected to some minor changes. General Katenin to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 20 July [2 August] 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 143.

⁷⁴⁵ Minister of Internal Affairs General Bibikov to the governors of the provinces, 17 [29] July 1855, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 572.

⁷⁴⁶ Poznakhirev, "Kurskaya guberniya i Turetskie voennoplennyye voin XIX veka", p. 154.

⁷⁴⁷ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 25.

However, General Williams and the officers under his command remained a bit longer in Tbilisi because of his illness. General Williams began his journey after the peace treaty, and he went directly to St. Petersburg in response to the kind invitation of the Russian tsar. Later he returned to Britain via Paris.⁷⁴⁸

According to the Statute, prisoners should be held in state buildings. If there were no such buildings available, it was then necessary to find another house that was convenient. As a result of the increase in the number of prisoners, if any problem arose the Governor was to inform the Minister of Internal Affairs of the situation, and Minister of Internal Affairs should determine a solution with the Minister of War.⁷⁴⁹ The Ottoman prisoners who were sent to Yaroslavl stayed in military barracks. British prisoners in Voronezh stayed in different large buildings. Newman describes the building they stayed in as a large house with large rooms, a balcony and a courtyard. The beds were erected on the walls just before the arrival of the British prisoners.⁷⁵⁰ Some prisoners were accommodated in a dormitory.⁷⁵¹ For the sailors of the *Tiger* who stayed in Odessa, a school building was used. The only problem was that the beds were too small for the sailors. The officers stayed in another building, which was likely most comfortable.⁷⁵²

Shopping, preparing and enjoying their meals were the prisoners' most important occupations. A Russian observer underlined the ability of the Ottoman soldiers to cook, and stated that they often cooked mutton.⁷⁵³ Prisoners spent their

⁷⁴⁸ Muravyov, vol. II, p. 229; Dodd, p. 468.

⁷⁴⁹ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 55.

⁷⁵⁰ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 156.

⁷⁵¹ The Gendarmerie of Moscow to Graf Orlov, 16 [28] November 1854, GARF, f. 109, 1. expedition, d. 359 part 1, l. 3.

⁷⁵² Royer, p. 30.

⁷⁵³ F. Zaitsov, "Nepriyatelskie voennoplennye v gorodakh Trubchevske i Koroche", *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Prilozheniya*, vol. XXV, p. 23.

rest of the time playing cards, instruments, performing exercises and reading books.⁷⁵⁴ The Muslim prisoners prayed and read Qur'an.⁷⁵⁵

Prisoners faced bureaucratic embezzlement and thefts. The corrupt Russian bureaucracy might offer undesired surprises. In this regard, Colonel Ali Nazım Bey and Egyptian Adjutant Ahmed Abdul attempted to correct the bureaucratic mistakes from which they suffered.

Ahmed Abdul sent a letter to the governor of Tula and explained that he was receiving 25 kopecks, which was less than what his colleagues received. Happily, his pay was corrected to 50 kopecks in early August 1854.⁷⁵⁶ British soldiers also suffered from underpayments. Newman claims that they learned from the French prisoners during the journey that their allowances should be 20 kopecks. Until then, they had received just 10 kopecks.⁷⁵⁷ The difference in pay between the European and the Ottoman prisoners might result in confusion. However, such errors could also have been made intentionally by Russian officials to make money.

There were also mistakes in the allocation of the prisoners to the Russian towns. When the Russian army passed the Danube in three columns, one column passed to Tulça where Ali Nazım Bey, the Colonel of the third regiment of the Rumelian Army, was captured. Ali Nazım Bey was the commander of Tulça and played a role in investigating Russian spies. Although the forces in Tulça made a good defense, they were far weaker than the Russian forces and the defensive line soon fell into Russian hands. Ali Nazım Bey was in the battery on Çatal Island and

⁷⁵⁴ See, *The Prisoners of Voronesh*.

⁷⁵⁵ Zaitsov, "Nepriyatelskie voennoplennye v gorodakh Trubchevske i Koroche", p. 23.

⁷⁵⁶ In the same letter, he mentioned that he met with Grand Duke Konstantin, the son of the Russian Tsar, during Konstantin's travel to Egypt. Thus, he stated his wish to pay a visit to St. Petersburg as the Egyptian prisoners of the steamer *Pervaz-i Bahrí*. We do not know whether his wish was granted. General Katenin to Minister of Internal Affairs, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 138.

⁷⁵⁷ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, p. 122.

was captured there. He was one of ten officers captured by the Russian South Army. The list stated that he was from Anatolia.⁷⁵⁸ On 7 April, Ali Nazım Bey was sent to Russia from İsmail, but he was sent to Oryol instead of Tula.⁷⁵⁹ Ali Nazım Bey arrived at Oryol in April, but he was still waiting to be sent to Tula in late June.⁷⁶⁰ The Ottoman Colonel might also have received a private allowance until his rank was adequately understood. This example not only showed the language barrier between the Ottoman prisoners and the Russian guards, but also the difficulty of remedying a bureaucratic mistake. There were likely many such mistakes. Another example was the mistaken dispatch of a French lieutenant to Voronezh, as if he were a British soldier.⁷⁶¹

According to the statute of the POWs in the War of 1828-29, prisoners, with the exception of the sick, elderly and deserters, could be assigned to work in fortresses, channels, etc.⁷⁶² Article 41 of the statute of 1854 reads that the prisoners could be assigned to state works, and they were paid the 2/3 of the pay of a private for their labor. The deserters could not be forced to work, but if they wished they could find a job under the guidance of the civilian authorities.⁷⁶³ In contrast to previous wars, the prisoners were not forced to work in the fortresses or arsenals, but

⁷⁵⁸ RGVIA, f. 9196, op. 4-257, d. 1, l. 10. The Russian commander Nikolai Ivanovich Ushakov, who narrated the battle of Tulça, renders Ali Nazım Bey incorrectly as Ali-Kazim Bek. N. I. Ushakov, "Zapiski ochevidtsa o voine Rossii protiv Turtsii i zapadnykh derzhav 1853-55", *Devyatnatsaty vek. Istoricheskii sbornik*, vol. II (Moscow, 1872), p. 71. He was promoted from the ranks. After the war he was promoted to a Brigadier General and received the order of Mecidiye. Mehmed Süreyya, claims that Ali Nazım was a *mirliva* during the Crimean War and was wounded and killed in Köstence. This information is wrong. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, prepared by Nuri Akbayar, transcribed by Seyit Ali Kahraman, vol. I (Istanbul, 1996), p. 271.

⁷⁵⁹ Military Governor of Oryol to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 6 [18] April 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, sv. 1, d. 1755, l. 89.

⁷⁶⁰ Inspector Department of the War Ministry to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 12 [24] June 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 122.

⁷⁶¹ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 192.

⁷⁶² PSZ, 2nd series, vol. IV (1829), p. 481.

⁷⁶³ Milovidov states that this article was never practiced, and the prisoners were not forced to work during the Crimean War. This information is incorrect. Milovidov, "Inostrannye voennoplennye i rossiiskoe obshchestvo v gody Krymskoi voiny", p. 150.

only in municipal works. Although such labor seemed easy, the Ottoman soldiers certainly did not enjoy it.

When the number of the Ottoman prisoners in Oryol increased, the municipal authorities considered their labor necessary to control them, and with the permission of the Ministry of War they were assigned to clean the roads of Oryol.⁷⁶⁴ This decision was primarily intended to guard the prisoners more securely and preserve public safety rather than to make use of the prisoners. However, it was not easy to force them to work. The Ottoman prisoners declined to perform such a job. In a petition, they explained that they were soldiers and knew no other profession. They expressed their wish to be assigned to the fortresses rather than to work in front of the Russian people.⁷⁶⁵ Obviously, the Ottoman soldiers did not think this job compatible with the honor of a soldier. Moreover, they likely did not wish to work in front of people who were antagonistic to them, or at least the Ottomans perceived them as hostile. When the efforts to convince them did not help to solve the problem, their resistance to work was even reported to the Russian Tsar. Nicholas I wanted the prisoners to be allocated to neighboring towns and work in accordance with the articles of the Statute under the guard of battalions in detention units. The Tsar openly stated that the prisoners would be forced to work if they resisted.⁷⁶⁶

The Ottoman prisoners in Smolensk also performed public works. However, these prisoners, most of whom were Kurds, did not object to their assignments.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁴ The Gendarmerie Commander of Oryol to the Commander of Gendarmerie and the Secret Police Graf Orlov, 16 [28] July 1854, GARF 109 1. expedition, d. 359 1. part, l. 9-22; The Governor of Oryol to Minister of Internal Affairs, 16 (28) July 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 133-136.

⁷⁶⁵ The Governor of Oryol to Minister of Internal Affairs, 16 [28] July 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 133.

⁷⁶⁶ Minister of War to Minister of Internal Affairs, 26 July [7 August] 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 133.

⁷⁶⁷ K. Mikeshin, “Kurdy v Smolenskoi gubernii”, *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Prilozheniya*, vol. XXV, pp. 29-30.

While the Ottomans were assigned to such forced labors, the Europeans were treated differently. The British soldiers, although they did not have to work, found a way to earn money. The sailors in Voronezh worked in transportation and earned a good amount of money.⁷⁶⁸ There were likely other prisoners in Russian towns who worked voluntarily or were forced to.

There is also no evidence regarding prisoners who might have joined the Russian military army. Apparently, the Russians were not particularly enthusiastic about assigning prisoners to the military, whereas many Polish and Jewish prisoners captured by the Allied forces fought against the Russians.⁷⁶⁹

6.2.1.4 The Rights of the POWs

The prisoners had the right to hold property. According to the statute, the prisoners' possessions were taken, but not appropriated. Their belongings were put into the provincial treasury and returned when the prisoners were released. Moreover, when necessary some of the prisoners' belongings might be returned while they were in captivity.⁷⁷⁰ However, it is not possible to argue that the prisoners' property was always well protected. Personal effects on the British steamer *Tiger* were looted. The belongings of a British officer were also stolen by a Russian soldier when he was captured. They were returned to the British officer when the Russian

⁷⁶⁸ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 181.

⁷⁶⁹ Boris P. Milovidov, "Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny", *Vestnik molodykh uchenykh*, no. 2 (2002), p. 31.

⁷⁷⁰ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 5 and 46.

soldier was punished.⁷⁷¹ The Russian soldiers, who received their salaries irregularly, often resorted to robbery.⁷⁷²

According to the Statute, wounded or sick soldiers could enjoy healthcare services like the Russian soldiers. The British prisoners expressed their satisfaction with the treatment they enjoyed in Russian hospitals.⁷⁷³ Therefore, although it is not clear how many prisoners were treated in Russian hospitals, at least they were likely well treated.

The prisoners were free to follow their rituals unless they broke the public order.⁷⁷⁴ The Muslims were permitted to perform their funerals according to Islamic principles.⁷⁷⁵ They could perform their daily prayers and read the Qur'an. However, to be sure, this does not mean that the Russian authorities helped the prisoners to perform their prayers. The Russians did not assign any clerics.

The correspondences among prisoners were allowed as long as their letters were controlled by the governor of the province.⁷⁷⁶ Prisoners occasionally sent letters to their families, which was certainly one of their primary requests. Royer expressed that they could freely write letters as long as they did not concern any political issues.⁷⁷⁷ These letters were first translated into Russian and read by the officials. The British officer Kelly complained that his letters, which would be published after the Crimean War, were received by his wife after an excessive delay.

⁷⁷¹ "A Peep behind the Scenes", p. 189.

⁷⁷² Mrs. Henry [Frances Isabella] Duberly, *Journal Kept during the Russian War* (London, 1855), p. 305.

⁷⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁷⁴ *Polozhenie o plennykh*, article 45.

⁷⁷⁵ Poznakhirev, "Evolyutsiya polozheniya Turetskikh voennoplennykh v Rossii v kontse XVII – nachale XX v.", <http://scientific-notep.ru/pdf/021-015.pdf>.

⁷⁷⁶ PSZ, 28522b (3 September 1854).

⁷⁷⁷ Royer, p. 30.

When the officers of the *Pervaz-i Bahri* were brought to Sevastopol, they wanted to send letters to their relatives. Letters, which were sent to Istanbul, first arrived at the Russian Headquarters on the Danube. On 19 November 1853, one report to the commander of the Egyptian fleet and 13 letters to their families were delivered to General Gorchakov via the Russian military port in Sevastopol. On 13 December, the letters were given to Robert Gilmour Colquhoun, the British consul in Bucharest.⁷⁷⁸ A few days later when he was on his way to Istanbul, Colquhoun delivered them to Said Pasha, the governor of Silistre.⁷⁷⁹ The letters arrived at their destinations only after changing hands many times. Vice-Admiral Osman Pasha's letter to his son arrived at Istanbul via the Prussian consulate in Odessa.⁷⁸⁰ A letter from Molla Hafiz Mansuroğlu to his family would be sent from Tula to the Principalities after it was censored by the Interior Ministry.⁷⁸¹ Another letter written by the Egyptian prisoners, in which they narrated their captivity, will be explained later.⁷⁸² The letters typically arrived at their designations despite the difficulties and extraordinary conditions of war.

6.2.1.5 Back Home

Captivity ended with prisoner exchange agreements concluded during or after the war. However, as an exception, prisoners were occasionally released under a gentleman's agreement that they would not participate in the war again. The first

⁷⁷⁸ RGVIA f. 846, op. 16, d. 5429, l. 248; BOA A.MKT.NZD 109-107, 25 Rebiülahir 1270 [25 January 1854]; BOA A.MKT.UM 151-9, 24 Rebiülahir 1270 [24 January 1854]

⁷⁷⁹ ATASE, k. 4, d. 12, f. 19/2.

⁷⁸⁰ BOA HR.MKT 109-91, 4 Şevval 1271 [20 June 1855].

⁷⁸¹ The Military Governor of Tula to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 22 February [6 March] 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 71.

⁷⁸² "The letters of the captive officers and doctor of the Egyptian steamer *Pervaz-i Bahri*", RGIA f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 1-5.

prisoners who returned their homelands were the prisoners in the second category, as the crew of *Pervaz-i Bahri* and the non-Muslim sailors of *Medar-i Ticaret*.⁷⁸³ Such releases also took a long time thanks to the Russian bureaucracy and the vast geography of the Russian Empire. In January 1854, it was declared that the captivity of the crew of *Medar-i Ticaret* had already ended, but their release would be initiated after their arrival at the towns of their imprisonment.⁷⁸⁴ Alexander Cleland and Archibald Morrison, who were captured aboard the steamer *Medar-i Ticaret*, arrived at Kursk on 12 February. The military governor of Kursk expressed that they would first be sent to Moscow, and via the British consul they would pass through Warsaw and Vienna to arrive at Istanbul, where their families resided.⁷⁸⁵ Michael Bell, the chief engineer of the *Pervaz-i Bahri* was asked if he wanted to remain in Russia. Bell and his friends Anderson and Baker would be released in a few months after their capture.⁷⁸⁶

First major prisoner exchange took place in 1854 between the crew of *Tiger* and the Greek battalion, who were captured in the battle of Balaklava.⁷⁸⁷ However, the exchange only became formalized in the spring of 1855 when an agreement between the allied powers and the Russian army was concluded. In late May 1855, the text of the agreement was received by Alexander Stroganov, the governor general of New Russia and Bessarabia. According to the treaty, the port of Odessa on the Black Sea and the port of Libava (Liepāja) on the Baltic would be used during the

⁷⁸³ The *Pervaz-i Bahri* officers to General Aleksandr Andreyevich Katenin, RGIA, f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 5.

⁷⁸⁴ Dolgorukov to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 16 January 1854 [28 January 1854], RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 42.

⁷⁸⁵ Their names were written in the Russian document as Archibald Marison and Alexander Klilen. The Military Governor of Kursk to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 2 [14] February 1854, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 14, d. 1755, l. 65; *Correspondence Respecting the Privileges of Latin and Greek Churches in Turkey*, part 7 (London, 1854), p. 929.

⁷⁸⁶ The conditions of English engineers soon appeared in the newspapers.

⁷⁸⁷ [William Burckhardt Barker], p. 163; Royer, pp. 57-58; Milovidov, "Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny", p. 29.

exchanges.⁷⁸⁸ After an exchange, if their health conditions permitted, the soldiers would once again participate in the war. Therefore, as a result of the need for technical personal during the war, the belligerents gave special importance to the exchange of skilled personal.⁷⁸⁹ However, the number of prisoners may not have been able to affect the course of the war. Thus, the exchanges were conducted for humanitarian reasons more than any tactical aims. Moreover, detainment of prisoners was costly and required guards. Thus, from the commencement of the war, the parties were willing to exchange prisoners.

Although the Ottomans began to discuss a prisoner exchange and its conditions in November 1854, agreement was concluded until the following year.⁷⁹⁰ Agreements would be concluded via the mediation of Austria. According to the agreement, one general would be equal to thirty privates, and a lieutenant or an officer who was equal to the rank of a captain of a battleship would be equal to fifteen privates during the exchange. The exchange did not include deserters or refugees, who could be charged with treason.⁷⁹¹ The Treaty of Paris included an article that reads, "Prisoners of War shall be immediately given up on either side". It was also stated that those who helped to the enemy would be forgiven. This decision might have been taken to protect the Crimean Tatars from any Russian oppression after the war.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁸ Knyaz Aleksandr V. Meshcherskii, "Zapiska o razmene v gorode Odesse plennykh voiny 1854-56 godov", *Russkii arkhiv* (St. Petersburg, 1899), p. 441.

⁷⁸⁹ Duberly, p. 301.

⁷⁹⁰ BOA A.MKT.NZD 121-72, 29 Safer 1271 [20 November 1854]; Translation of the letter sent from Count Nesselrode to Prince Gorchakov dated 19 April 1855. İ.HR, 125-6292, 26 Safer 1272 [7 November 1855].

⁷⁹¹ BOA A.AMD 62-44, 1271 [1854-1855].

⁷⁹² "... kendi tebaalarından olup da düşmana müsaid suretle muharebe-i hazırla vukuatından hissedar olmuşları cumleten afv-i umumî ile afv ederler. Şurası dahi mahsusen mukarrerdir ki düvel-i muharebe tebaasından olup da muharebe esnasında diğer bir muharip tarafın hizmetinde bulunmağa devam etmiş olanlar dahi afv-i umumî-i mezkûrun şüümülli olacaktır." Paris Peace Treaty, article 5.

The number of Russian prisoners in the hands of the French was larger than the number of French prisoners in Russia; therefore, some Russian prisoners were exchanged for Ottoman prisoners. Osman Pasha was exchanged for Yakov Andreievich Bodisko, who was captured by the French in Bomarsund.⁷⁹³ In October 1855, along with Osman Pasha, Colonel Ali Bey and 35 other officers arrived at Istanbul.⁷⁹⁴ After their arrival at Istanbul, the Ottoman prisoners were sent to their homes. However, it was difficult to bring the Ottoman prisoners from the Russian interior to Odessa. Thus, the exchange took a long time for the Ottoman prisoners, who were much more numerous than the French, British, and Sardinians.⁷⁹⁵

The Porte paid the salaries of the prisoners and their costs to travel home. The main problem was to determine whether they had deserted. In this regard, 100 prisoners taken from the Kars Fortress received 250 piastres each.⁷⁹⁶ Ahmed from İlbasan and the driver Kirkor were also paid 500 piastres each.⁷⁹⁷ Davud, who was taken aboard the steamer *Medar-i Ticaret* was also given 200 piastres for his travel expenses.⁷⁹⁸ If the need arose, some portion of the salaries of the Ottoman soldiers was paid to their families during their captivity. When the above-mentioned Kasımpaşalı Halil Efendi was a prisoner in Russia, half of his salary was given to his

⁷⁹³ Translation of the letter sent from Count Nesselrode to Prince Gorchakov dated 19 April 1855. BOA İ.HR 125-6292, 26 Safer 1272 [7 November 1855].

⁷⁹⁴ BOA HR.MKT 124-78, 12 Safer 1272 [24 October 1855]; BOA A.DVN 109-40, 29 Safer 1272 [10 November 1855]. Osman Pasha wanted the exchange of 156 prisoners taken at the battle of Sinop with the Russian prisoners kept in the Imperial Arsenal. 28 in the *Avnillah*, 100 in the *Nesim-i Zafer*, 22 in the *Fazlullah* frigates and 6 of them were taken in the *Necm-i Efşan* corvette. Badem, p. 123, footnote 61.

⁷⁹⁵ Milovidov, "Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny", p. 29.

⁷⁹⁶ BOA A.AMD 68-52, 1272 [1855-1856].

⁷⁹⁷ BOA A.AMD 69-80, 1272 [1855-1856].

⁷⁹⁸ BOA A.MKT.NZD 180-28, 22 Receb 1272 [29 March 1856].

parents.⁷⁹⁹ Other families might also have enjoyed such benevolence on the part of the Ottoman government.

6.2.1.6 Some Stayed in Russia

After the war, the Russian Interior Ministry asked the provinces if any prisoners remained in Russia.⁸⁰⁰ Not all prisoners had returned to their homelands. There were wounded and sick prisoners, and some prisoners wished to remain in Russia. Selim, Ali, Said and Şerif had lost their lives in Podolia when they were on the way to the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁰¹ Ultimately, hundreds of Ottoman soldiers died in the Russian Empire.

According to one of the reports of Knyaz Meshcherskii, the officer responsible for the exchange of prisoners, there were 44 who wanted to remain in Russia.⁸⁰² The prisoners were asked why they wanted to stay. Some responded that they wanted to become Christians, and others expressed their wish to escape punishment by staying in Russia. Some of these prisoners were legionnaires who fought in the allied armies. These men likely wanted to try their luck in Russia. Some others were deserters who were from the various non-Muslim Ottoman communities, most of whom were drafted into the Ottoman Cossacks. They likely believed that they would be punished if they returned. Those who stayed in Russia were either deserters or individuals who no longer wished to serve in the army. It is not likely that there was any other reason.

⁷⁹⁹ BOA I.MVL 308-12809, 3 Şevval 1270 [29 June 1854].

⁸⁰⁰ RGIA, f. 1286, op. 17, d. 244, l. 12-13.

⁸⁰¹ The Governor of the Province of Podolya to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 7 [19] July 1857, RGIA, f. 1286, op. 17, d. 244, l. 76.

⁸⁰² The Governor of Novorossiya and Bessarabia to the Commander of the 2. Army, 22 June [4 July] 1856, RGVIA, f. 9198, op. 3-262, d. 10, l. 1-6.

The Ottoman soldiers had to apostatize to remain in Russia. Halil, the sergeant of Anatolian Dragoon division, who was captured at Kars, Bilal, only thirteen years old when he was captured at the battle of Sinop, Ali Atoiy, one of the sailors of the *Pervaz-i Bahri* and Ali (baptized by Nikolai Gavrimov) and Valim (baptized by Vasilii Konstantinov) were some of the prisoners who accepted the Orthodox faith.⁸⁰³

According to these regulations, all of the deserters of foreign powers and those Muslims who converted to the Orthodox faith could become Russian subjects and remain in Russia. They would have one year in which they could travel in Russia to find a job and a town in which to live. Meanwhile, they would have a temporary passport. If they failed in these requirements, and could not claim acceptable reasons, their passports would not be extended.⁸⁰⁴

The prisoners would not pay tax or be eligible for the conscription for ten years after they were granted Russian citizenship. They would not be charged for their petitions. The Russian government sought rapid and easy resolution of the prisoners' problems. The prisoner could be a craftsman, but there was no obstacle to performing any other profession. They could be a state peasant or serve in the army. They were also provided with accommodations.⁸⁰⁵ Nonetheless, it seems that there was no real encouragement to settle them in Russia. There was no mention of a respected profession or a guaranteed income. The Russian government did not take a negative

⁸⁰³ RGIA, f. 1286, op. 17, d. 244, l. 38 ob., 80 and 101.

⁸⁰⁴ RGIA, f. 1286, op. 17, d. 244, l. 65, article 10.

⁸⁰⁵ "The rules approved by His Majesty which will be applied to the deserters of the foreign armies who stayed here after the past war", RGIA, f. 1286, op. 17, d. 244, l. 65, article 4. Although the title denoted only deserters, the rules included all the prisoners who wished to remain in Russia.

stance regarding the prisoners of war citizenship, but did not encourage them either.

The only exception was the settlement of the technical personnel as shown above.⁸⁰⁶

6.2.1.7. Social Life in Russia and the Relations between the Ottoman Prisoners and Russian Society

While there were people who helped the prisoners by giving them food and clothing and showing mercy and sympathy, there were also people who made fun of them, cheated them, beat and even killed them. Ottoman prisoners were occasionally regarded as the major reasons for fires or diseases. Thus, they did not always live safely among the local population. The prisoners, especially the officers, enjoyed better relations with the local notables than the ordinary people. In short, there were positive and negative aspects of the relations between the prisoners and the host nation.

An anecdote of a certain Ottoman soldier, who had participated in the construction works of the French army and was captured by the Russian Cossacks, is a good example of Russian perceptions of the Ottoman prisoners:

- Hey Turk, did you come to fight, can you understand whom you are fighting with? Is that the war that you want?
- Why are you having fun with him? Do you think he came voluntarily? He also had his commanders.
- We know that.
- What do you know? Look my friends, he is almost naked, barefoot ...
- ... He is also a man even though he was not baptized...⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰⁶ The engineers of the *Pervaz-i Bahri* and the *Medar-i Ticaret* were given to choice to stay in Russia or to leave. In the 17th and 18th centuries the Ottoman and the Crimean Tatar prisoners were sent to Tula to work in the weapon industry. However, the skilled ones were only a small part of all prisoners. Therefore, the prisoners were generally used in the hard labor or agriculture. On the other hand, the Ottomans encouraged the staying of the Muslim prisoners taken from the Russian army in the Ottoman Empire.

⁸⁰⁷ P. Turbin, "Plennyi Turok", *Voennyi sbornik*, no. 4 (April), 1864 (St Petersburg), p. 393.

The Russian soldiers, who were themselves in need of many things, found clothing and even obtained a pipe for the Ottoman prisoner.⁸⁰⁸ They did not regard a Muslim prisoner as their equal, but pity overcame anger.

Russian manners were also positively portrayed in the reminiscences of the British prisoners. An English prisoner in Odessa says that “it is indeed but justice to add, that throughout our stay in Russia, both from high and low, great and small, we experienced unvaried and uniform kindness, which it would be more than invidious to deny”.⁸⁰⁹ Royer was pleased with the Russian treatment: “the kindness we had already experienced sufficed to assure us that no unnecessary harshness or severity of treatment was intended by our civilized enemies.”⁸¹⁰ High officials, particularly Baron Osten-Sacken, the commander of the Russian Third Army and his wife, and Annenkov, the Governor of Odessa paid close attention to Royer.⁸¹¹ Colonel Lake says, “our late foes, the Russians, are a generous and hospitable people.”⁸¹²

Such affirmative expressions could also be found in official British documents. General Williams writes in one of his letters to Lord Clarendon, British Minister of Foreign Affairs, “I have already told your lordship of General Mouravieff’s kindness towards myself and my party; but his humanity and benevolent treatment of the poor famished garrison of Kars will gain for him the respect of the civilized world, and must tend to lessen, if not eradicate, the animosity which for more than a century has existed between Russia and Turkey, especially on the part of the latter.”⁸¹³ Captain Montagu, who returned to his army after a prisoner in July 1855, expressed his

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid

⁸⁰⁹ [William Burckhardt Barker], p. 38.

⁸¹⁰ Royer, p. 50.

⁸¹¹ Ibid, p. 28.

⁸¹² Lake, p. x.

⁸¹³ Dodd, p. 468

satisfaction with Russian hospitality.⁸¹⁴ Two British soldiers in Petropavlovsk on the Pacific Ocean were also well treated.⁸¹⁵

Some prisoners experienced more than a routine life in Russia. Lake's expressions are clear: "My diary at Penza is such a repetition of pleasant parties, kind attentions, and all that is agreeable to remember, that I fear I shall shock the minds of well-regulated people who probably think that a prisoner should have been consistently miserable, or that an Englishman should never admire, or, if he does, should not laud, the graces of Foreign Society."⁸¹⁶ At first glance, Lake's expressions are not an exaggeration. The prisoners in Odessa celebrated at parties until the early morning, danced with the beauties of Odessa, and sometimes after too much drinking with Russian officers continued to enjoy themselves on the streets of Odessa. It seems that captivity was not such a horrible experience for some of the prisoners.⁸¹⁷

The Ottoman prisoners were also happy with their treatment. Lieutenant Royer, on his way to St. Petersburg, met with four Ottoman officers in Tula who were captured on one of the steamers in the Black Sea. One of the Ottoman prisoners was speaking in broken English. They were likely the wounded officers of *Pervaz-i Bahri* who were sent captivity in the Russian interior after receiving medical treatment. Royer claims, "They had been about three months in this place, and evinced no desire to return to their country, expressing themselves quite satisfied with the friendly treatment they experienced at the hands of their enemies. Indeed I have since been assured that one of these men, at St. Petersburg, actually burst into tears when

⁸¹⁴ "James Simpson to Lord Panmure, 4 August 1855, Sevastopol", *London Gazette*, 16 August 1855, no. 21763, p. 3113.

⁸¹⁵ "Rear-Admiral H. W. Bruce to Admiralty, 15 June 1855, Petropavlovsk", *London Gazette*, 11 September 1855, no. 21780, p. 3403.

⁸¹⁶ Lake, p. 317

⁸¹⁷ [William Burckhardt Barker], pp. 57-58.

his release was announced to him!”⁸¹⁸ Although captivity was difficult for the aged Vasif Pasha, the Russian ballet eased some of his pain. “The Mushir, after his arrival, accompanied us one evening, and his habitual gloom for a time vanished while witnessing Madame Petrova’s admirable impersonation of character, in a language which none of us understood, or while gazing admiringly on the many-twinkling feet of Mesdemoiselles Sankoffsky, Gregoriova, and Ivanovna.”⁸¹⁹

However, the relations between the prisoners and the local population were not always good. In December 1854, when the new Russian conscripts were walking in front of the house where the Ottoman prisoners were lodged, the conscripts made signs to harass the prisoners. The angry Ottomans then followed them with sticks, and one of them even attacked a Russian conscript with an axe.⁸²⁰ Another source explains a more dramatic event. If the information regarding the massacre of two hundred Ottoman soldiers is true, we do not yet know the details of this tragedy.⁸²¹

6.2.1.8 The Ottoman Prisoners in the Eyes of the Europeans

First hand sources or interpretations are always important to reconstruct a historical event – correctly or incorrectly - centuries later. The Ottomans (more correctly the Tunisians) were made scapegoats for the failure in the battle of Balaklava, and throughout the war they were accused of cowardice. This was because that the British constructed the story one-sidedly, and the voice of the Ottomans could not be heard. Sergeant Newman explained the opinions among the

⁸¹⁸ Royer, p. 115.

⁸¹⁹ Lake, p. 257

⁸²⁰ ГАРФ, ф. 109, 4. экспедиция, оп. 194, д. 189, л. 2 as quoted in Poznakhirev, “Evolyutsiya polozheniya Turetskikh voennoplennykh v Rossii v kontse XVII – nachale XX v.”, <http://scientific-note.ru/pdf/021-015.pdf>.

⁸²¹ *The Prisoners of Voronezh*, p. 168.

British soldier well: “We soldiers despised the whole of the Turkish race for their cowardice in running away from the batteries at Balaclava and letting the Russians right in upon our lines and thereby bringing on the battle of Balaclava when so many of our light cavalry were killed and taken.”⁸²² While the viewpoints of the British soldiers affected the perceptions of the Ottoman soldier during and after the war, the Russians were fairer in their assessment of the Ottoman defense of Balaklava.⁸²³ The allied soldiers did not regard the Ottomans as their equals; they were frequently affronted and saw them as inconceivable foreigners, if not savages. Such negative opinions and feelings also affected the relations between prisoners.

While the battle of Balaklava played a role in establishing the idea of the “cowardly Turk”, the obedient and submissive character of the Ottoman soldiers reinforced it. The Ottomans, who worked in the rear, carried cargo and wounded soldiers. Thus, one French prisoner called the Ottomans a nation of “pack animals”.⁸²⁴ Allied soldiers made no attempt to conceal their insults and contempt. They did not want to share a place with the Ottomans and wanted to be apart from their Muslim allies.⁸²⁵ However, despite all sorts of clashes and fights, the French and British were friends who shared same destiny and shared similar enjoyments.

Sergeant Walsh, who was captured at Inkerman, met the sons of Nicholas I, the princes Nicholas and Mikhail. According to Walsh, the Russian princes classified the prisoners into three categories in which the British were the first class, the French the second and the Ottomans the third, and the prisoners would be treated in accordance

⁸²² Ibid, p. 98.

⁸²³ This biased attitude, which could also be seen in the Crimean War literature in English, has only recently changed. Robert B. Edgerton, *Death or Glory: The Legacy of the Crimean War* (Boulder and Oxford, 1999), pp. 168-169; Badem, p. 42.

⁸²⁴ Zaytsov, “Nepriyatelskie voennoplennye v gorodakh Trubchevske i Koroche”, p. 24.

⁸²⁵ *The Prisoners of Voronesh*, pp. 88-89, 98-99, 240.

with this categorization. The Princes most likely wanted to pay a compliment, but to the British sergeant this classification was a normal and natural one.⁸²⁶ Sergeant Walsh compared the prisoners from different nations: “the French are too polite to kick a row, the Turks too frightened, but the English are neither one or the other. Whenever they think they are insulted or imposed upon, they resent it in grand style, no matter the odds against them.”⁸²⁷ Lieutenant Royer’s comparison of the Ottomans with the Russians also revealed the European perception of the Ottoman soldier: “Indeed the sympathy everywhere shown us was remarkable; and the conduct of our civilized enemies afforded a striking contrast to that of our barbarous allies, to whose assistance our country has generously proceeded. While staying at Constantinople we were often spat upon in the streets by the Turkish children, who certainly would not have felt such an abhorrence of us, if it had not been instilled into them by their parents, who no doubt expressed in private the feelings which were thus aped and reflected by their little counterparts.”⁸²⁸

One of the British soldiers in Odessa went to the opera with an Ottoman. The British expressed his astonishment: “I was much amused at the conclusion of the opera (which was really very fairly executed), when I asked him how he liked it? ‘Eh kardash,’ said he, ‘it is all very well, but at the end of it we go home, and there remains nothing in our hand for our money’” This Ottoman soldier was Ahmed Efendi. He was sent to France, learned some French, and served in France as a sailor. He was captured when he was under the command of one of the Pashas in the battle of Sinop. His portrait drawn by his British comrade is expressive:

Ahmed Effendi, whom I had frequently met in society, was a prisoner like myself, on parole, and there was no likelihood of his breaking it, for he certainly was better off as

⁸²⁶ “A Peep behind the Scenes”, p. 192.

⁸²⁷ Ibid, p. 200.

⁸²⁸ Royer, p. 50.

a prisoner than he would have been had he been free, and serving on board a Turkish man-of-war. In this situation the salary that is allotted to a man is never paid, and though living in the midst of abundance, he is often suffered to be without the necessities of life... He was kindly treated, found in everything he required, and allowed to visit the first people in the city, who received him hospitably and with generous feeling. He was a wretched little man in appearance, one of the degenerate race, of whom you see too many in Constantinople, thin and lank in face and body, and whose bandy legs are now rendered more conspicuous in the ridiculous costume they have adopted, and which they consider as a fair imitation of the European dress; their coats are made without a seam in the back, and this brings their awkward high shoulders and their arms more into notice; and they wear no waistcoat, although this ‘buttressed-up coat’ is generally left open to show their dirty coloured cotton shirt, covered by a little short scant beard of two or three inches length, which is generally red, with very bare cheeks. This race is called by the Turks ‘Cusa,’ and is considered to be the cleverest of all the family tribe of Tartaric breed... I used to see him at all the parties, and although he had never been able to adopt the feelings of a gentleman, he had at least the outward semblance of a quiet, harmless individual, which was all that was required to ensure him protection and polite attention.⁸²⁹

The contempt and disrespect of soldiers from two major countries of civilized Europe regarding their “oriental and barbaric” ally, and the curiosity and respect of the Russians, the eternal enemy of the Ottomans, towards Ottoman prisoners composed an interesting and ironic contradiction. Approximately 100 Ottoman prisoners who fell into enemy hands after the battle of Kürekdere, most of whom were Kurds, were sent to small town Roslavl in Smolensk Province. An article published in the newspaper *Severnaya pchela* included important details regarding these prisoners. They were religious people who regularly read the Qur'an and performed their prayers. They rose early and helped beggars or ladies who were carrying water. They even risked their lives to put out a fire in the town. Thus, these faithful and sober people enjoyed the love and respect of the local population.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁹ Ibid, pp. 144-147.

⁸³⁰ K. Mikeshin, “Kurdy v Smolenskoi gubernii”, *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Prilozheniya*, vol. XXV, pp. 27-31.

6.2.1.9 An Exceptional Captivity: The Adventures of the Officers of the *Pervaz-i Bahri*

Some prisoners were more fortunate than others. It can be claimed that the officers experienced a better life during captivity than the privates and the Europeans' captivity was far more comfortable than the Ottomans'. For some, captivity even became an enjoyable vacation. Therefore, the experiences of the officers of the *Pervaz-i Bahri* deserve to be treated as an interesting case of captivity.

Their experiences were hardly typical, but they were also not unique. One of the special guests of Nicholas I was Lieutenant Royer, the captain of the *Tiger*. Royer was hosted in the best way in every city that he visited, and he ultimately arrived at the Russian capital. After a trip around the city, he paid a visit to the Tsar. He then left St Petersburg for home. Before his departure, Dolgorukov, the Russian War Minister, asked for a favor. Royer would explain to the British public that the Russians were not a barbaric nation. The British officer fulfilled Dolgorukov's request in his reminiscences, which he published just after his arrival in Britain.⁸³¹ This book was criticized by the anti-Russians in Britain, as the author highly praised the Russians.⁸³² There were also other Europeans who visited St. Petersburg. One of them was Joseph Guilhem Lagondie, a French officer who was captured on 19 September 1854.⁸³³ In the very end of the war, General Williams was accepted by Alexander II, who most likely wanted to hear some authentic information regarding the defense of the Fortress of Kars.

⁸³¹ Royer, p. 176.

⁸³² Dodd, p. 115; [William Burckhardt Barker], pp. 39-42.

⁸³³ *Vospominaniya V. I Baryatinskogo*, pp. 23-24; *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, vol. III, p. 597.

The first prisoners who were invited to the Russian capital were the Ottoman officers. Captain Hacı Abdullatif, Captain Emrullah, Lieutenant Osman, Lieutenant Hassaneyn⁸³⁴ and Lieutenant Doctor Jadullah Efendi were granted an audience by the Russian Tsar. These officers were old, and Jadullah Efendi was an Ethiopian.⁸³⁵

After the first battle between the steamers, the Russians captured the *Pervaz-i Bahri*, which was heavily damaged. On 19 November 1853, after two days' voyage on the Black Sea, the crew of an Egyptian steamer arrived at Sevastopol.⁸³⁶ During this voyage, the prisoners were treated well. The sailors were offered soup, while the officers had their supper with the Russian captain. The Russian officers asked questions about the battle. The prisoners relaxed after this intimate and cordial conversation.⁸³⁷ Knyaz Baryatinskii, a Russian officer, reported that the conversation was jovial. After the meal, everyone cheered up and traded jokes. The Russian officer claims that anger could easily become sympathy and friendly feelings under certain conditions.⁸³⁸

This interest and attention paid to the Ottoman prisoners increased in Sevastopol. They were served food and drink, visited by the notables, and received medical treatment. 20 Ottoman soldiers were soon healed. Eleven privates, Captain Ahmed and Lieutenant Hacı Ahmed were left in the hospital of Sevastopol. The rest

⁸³⁴ The name of this prisoners passes differently in the Russian documents: Gassanin, Gassaneyn, Gusseyn. This should be a result of different pronunciations of the name Hassaneyn by the Russians.

⁸³⁵ *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Politicheskii otdel*, vol. IV (St. Petersburg, 1854), p. 164. Captain Yaronovetskii writes that the only doctor was an Arab. This expression shows the extent to which he was remote from the prisoners. For the Russian officer, the other prisoners should be Turks. Thus he used the word Arab instead of Negro. Captain Yaronovetskii to Colonel Brynchaninov, 19 [31] December 1853, GARF, f. 109, 1. expedition, d. 359 part 1, l. 5.

⁸³⁶ “Izvestiya s Chernogo Morya”, 17 November 1853 [29 November 1853], *Sobranie donezenii*, p. 27.

⁸³⁷ RGIA, f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 1ob.-2.

⁸³⁸ *Vospominaniya V. I Baryatinskogo*, p. 54. Similarly, the Russian sailors who killed thousands of Ottomans in the battle of Sinop, gave their overcoats to the prisoners. *Materialy*, vol. I, p. 204.

were transferred to Odessa. In Odessa, the officers were provided with houses, servants and a cook. Moreover, the officers attended parties given in their honor.⁸³⁹

The journey of the Egyptian officers from Odessa to Moscow took eighteen days. The governor of Moscow hosted the prisoners in his own home. The prominent figures of Moscow, especially the women, showed a great interest in the prisoners. The prisoners rested in Moscow for one night, and the following day they continued their journey by train.⁸⁴⁰ The last phase of journey took 22 hours, and they were received at the railway station by Colonel Petrovich. On the same day, the prisoners paid a visit to General Katenin and War Minister Dolgorukov.⁸⁴¹

Dolgorukov was sincere when he said, “do not feel yourselves as prisoners, you are but our guests.” They accommodated in a house with servants and a cook as in Odessa. Colonel Petrovich was careful in fulfilling their requests. In two days’ time, their clothing for the ceremony was prepared. Along with evening dress, they were given shoes, boots and gloves.⁸⁴²

The prisoners characterized the time in St Petersburg as follows: “We had ten peaceful days as guests.” They were then presented to the Tsar. The Tsar was cordial to the prisoners. “Although you are my enemy, I like soldiers. You fought a lot. I wanted to see you and so called you here. In five to ten days, after you have travelled throughout the capital, I will send you home.”⁸⁴³

Prisoners visited various buildings in St Petersburg such as palaces, schools, the fortress, the admiralty, arsenal and royal mint. They attended operas and ballets

⁸³⁹ RGIA, f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 2.

⁸⁴⁰ The train departed Moscow at 11:00 A.M. and arrived at St. Petersburg the following morning at 9:00 A.M. Royer, pp. 124-130

⁸⁴¹ RGIA, f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 2-2ob.

⁸⁴² RGIA, f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 3.

⁸⁴³ RGIA, f. 970, op. 1, d. 991, l. 3-3ob.

at night, a *sine quo non* cultural expedition. Although they were happy in St. Petersburg, they were homesick and wished return home.⁸⁴⁴ After fourteen days in St. Petersburg, on 20 December, their new journey to Ottoman territory began under the guidance of Kırım Giray, a Caucasian who would be their translator.⁸⁴⁵ They arrived at Warsaw and stayed there for four days. They visited the famous Russian commander Prince Paskevich, and they watched an opera. Finally, they were delivered to the Russian Embassy in Vienna.⁸⁴⁶ They then arrived at Alexandria via Trieste.⁸⁴⁷

6.2.2. Russian Prisoners of War in the Ottoman Empire

American missionaries who visited the Russian prisoners in Istanbul described them, “They were mostly short-bodied, round-faced men, without the slightest intellectual capacity; but three or four could read – only one, I think, was ready to accept a copy of the Scriptures.”⁸⁴⁸

The Russian soldiers who were captured by the Ottoman army either experienced harsh conditions at the *Tersane-i Amire* (Imperial Shipyard) or spent their time in the isolated Anatolian town of Kütahya. Those who were captured by the allied powers in the Crimean peninsula were also dispatched to Istanbul and placed in the Princess Islands. The wounded Russian prisoners were treated in the Ottoman capital before they were transferred to France and Britain. The prisoners

⁸⁴⁴ Same document.

⁸⁴⁵ The name is rendered as Kerim Girey in the document. Kırım Geray, a characteristic name of the members of the dynasty of the Crimean Khanate, was then popularly used by the Caucasians but with different pronunciations.

⁸⁴⁶ *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny. Politicheskii otdel*, vol. IV, p. 164.

⁸⁴⁷ BOA HR.MKT, 76-62, 12 Şaban 1270 [10 May 1854].

⁸⁴⁸ McCormick, p. 124.

were detained in the port cities. In France, the prisoners were accommodated in Toulon and the island of Aix, while in Britain they were placed Plymouth, Sheerness and Lewes. Those who were in Plymouth lived in military barracks, while in Lewes they were placed in a reformatory. The prisoners in Britain did not cause any public disorder. The Finnish prisoners, who were taken at Bomarsund, aroused public interest, for they were the first prisoners that the British people had experienced in 40 years.⁸⁴⁹

6.2.2.1 Number of Russian Prisoners of War

According to the records of the Russian War Ministry, those who returned from captivity were 2 generals, 15 *shtab-ofitsers*, 166 *ober-ofitsers*, 6,187 privates, and 1,267 non-combatants. A total of 2 officers and 213 privates died in captivity.⁸⁵⁰ There were also numerous deserters from the Russian ranks who did not wish to return to Russia. In particular, Muslims and Poles, who frequently had deserted the Russian army, were not prone to return. Thus, it can be safely assumed that allied forces captured approximately 8,000 prisoners of war in total.

The major events that resulted in the capture of the Russian soldiers were the amphibious operations of the naval powers in the Baltic and the Black seas. The British captured approximately 2000 Finnish and Russian prisoners at Bomarsund. There were 51 officers, 28 women and 13 children. British and French forces took approximately 1300 men in Kilburun. During the war, the Ottomans captured the schooner *Alupka*, and the British *Svyatoi Ioann Predtecha* and *Svyatoi Nikolai*. After

⁸⁴⁹ Milovidov, “Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny”, pp. 28-36; Dodd, pp. 177, 218.

⁸⁵⁰ Milovidov, “Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny”, p. 29.

the battle of Alma, 353 soldiers were taken prisoner, and at Inkerman approximately 600 soldiers fell into captivity.⁸⁵¹

Prisoners of war were divided among the allies; those who captured them also retained them. The French and British armies had the larger part the Russian prisoners. It is unclear how many of them were captured by the Ottoman army. Yet, as the Ottoman army only played a secondary role in the Crimean peninsula and in other expeditions such as Kerch and Kılburun, only a small proportion of this number was in the hands of the Ottomans.

There were approximately 10,000 Ottoman captives in Russia, while the French and the British prisoners were few when compared with such a number. Thus, there was a clear imbalance between the Russian prisoners captured by the Ottomans and the Ottoman prisoners in Russian hands.

6.2.2.2 Accommodation of the Russian Prisoners

Captives were dispatched to and accommodated in three different countries. (I have no information whether there were any Russian prisoners in the hands of the Sardinians) They were generally hosted in port cities and on islands, i.e., Istanbul in the Ottoman Empire, Plymouth, Lewes and Sheerness in Great Britain and Toulon and the island of Aix in France. The British official paper mentions about 746 Russian prisoners in Britain in the spring of 1855. There were 647 Russians, 7 Tatars, 87 Polish, and 5 Jews.⁸⁵² It was not easy to transfer hundreds of prisoners from the Crimea or other theatres of the war to France and Britain. Therefore, a

⁸⁵¹ Milovidov, “Russkie voennoplennye v gody Krymskoi voiny”, p. 29; Dodd, p. 176.

⁸⁵² “War Department, May 29, 1855”, *London Gazette*, 29 May 1855, no. 21721, pp. 2061-2064.

sizeable portion of them was kept in Istanbul, at least for some time. Thus, the Ottoman capital provided lodgings and hospitals not only for the allied forces but also for the Russian prisoners. Thousands of Russian soldiers experienced an isolated life in the Ottoman Empire, i.e., in the Princess Islands, in the State Shipyard and of course in several hospitals throughout the Bosphorus.

The Princess Islands, a traditional destination for the exiles, especially in the Byzantine period, were reserved for the POWs of the allied powers. To be sure, it was easier to control the captives there. Britain used the islands of Proti (Kinaliada) and Antigone (Pyrgos or Burgazada), and the French Prinkipo (Büyükada). The Greek monasteries, which had the capacity to host hundreds of Russian soldiers, were used to provide accommodations. The Aya Yorgi and Aya Nikola monasteries in Prinkipo, for instance, had been reserved for this purpose. The sick prisoners, who were captured by the British army, were mainly kept at Kuleli and the British naval hospital at Therapia.⁸⁵³

Some of the prisoners taken by the Ottoman forces were accommodated in the Imperial Shipyard. McCormick narrates, “[A] long row of barracks [in Kasımpaşa] were used for the safe keeping of a portion of the Russian prisoners. I passed by these buildings frequently, and always saw the round faces of the captured, peering through the upper Windows, and heard them singing in quite merry strain.”⁸⁵⁴ A small number of the captives were sent to the state farm (*Çifteler Çiftliği*) in Kütahya province in Anatolia. In the chaotic environment of war, Russians were the last people that the inhabitants of Istanbul wished to see. Relations between the allied soldiers and the local population were far from friendly. *Çifteler Çiftliği* was no

⁸⁵³ McCormick, p. 192.

⁸⁵⁴ McCormick, pp. 198-199.

better for the prisoners. The population of Kütahya hardly welcomed their Russian guests, where they lived in difficult conditions.⁸⁵⁵ Some of these prisoners, who were employed in agriculture, had conducted espionage activities for the Russians during the war.⁸⁵⁶ Therefore, farm work was a punishment for them. Such an experience, however, proved unfavorable for the prisoners and far from prestigious for the Ottoman government. Consequently, these prisoners (34 men in total) were sent back to Istanbul, as they were not treated adequately.⁸⁵⁷

6.2.2.3 The Treatment of the Russian Prisoners

During the Crimean War, Austrian diplomats were charged with determining whether the needs of the Russian prisoners were adequately met.⁸⁵⁸ They were, however, criticized for not devoting the necessary attention to the living conditions of the Russian prisoners. Anatoliy Demidov, a famous Russian businessman, also performed services for Russian prisoners in France, Britain and the Ottoman Empire. His activities improved the treatment of the Russian prisoners. Demidov and his assistants visited the prisoners, asked their needs, and supplied them with the necessary products. Jacques Alleon, a French banker in Istanbul, assisted Demidov in his activities in Istanbul.⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁵ BOA A.AMD 69-56.

⁸⁵⁶ BOA İ.DH 286-17951, 28 Rebiulevvel 1270.

⁸⁵⁷ "...orada kendilerine layikıyla bakılamadıklarından" BOA A.AMD 69-56.

⁸⁵⁸ BOA HR.MKT 89-69, 22 Muharrem 1271.

⁸⁵⁹ Jacques Meurant, "Anatole Demidoff pionnier de l'assistance aux prisonniers de guerre", in *Préludes et pionniers: les précurseurs de la Croix-Rouge, 1840-1860*, edited by Roger Durand, Jacques Meurant, Youssef Cassis (Geneva, 1991), pp. 95-117; For the reports prepared by the representatives of Demidov in Istanbul, see, "Izvestiya o nashykh plennykh v Konstantinopole", *Morskoi sbornik*, no. 6 (1856), pp. 127-129.

Russian privates were supplied with the daily rations of Ottoman soldiers. Officers of course enjoyed better conditions than the rank and file. They were even given spirits, despite this not being traditional. This was explained as a demonstration of the greatness of the Ottoman state.

	Butter	Coffee	Sugar	Tea	Tobacco	Bread/ Biscuit	Meal	Candle
Captain	40 <i>Dirhem</i>	5 <i>Dirhem</i>	50 <i>Dirhem</i>	3 <i>Dirhem</i>	50 <i>Dirhem</i>	1 /1	4 plates (Morning- evening)	Each night 1
Lieutenant	40 <i>Dirhem</i>	5 <i>Dirhem</i>	50 <i>Dirhem</i>	3 <i>Dirhem</i>	50 <i>Dirhem</i>	0/2	4 plates (Morning- evening)	Each night 1

Rations for the officers⁸⁶⁰

The captives' journey from the Caucasus to Istanbul was a long one. Many were thus exchanged rather than sent to the Ottoman capital.⁸⁶¹ They were held in the fortresses of Kars and Erzurum until the date of their exchange. They were far from the control of the central government and were likely subject to more arbitrary treatment. The treatment of the captives was influenced by the local commander. British officers in Kars claimed that the Ottomans treated the Russian prisoners humanely, especially those who were wounded.

The prisoners could attend religious services. In that respect, the Ottoman government supplied "trusted" Orthodox priests.⁸⁶² Those who died in captivity were buried according to their faiths.⁸⁶³ Russian captives were able to send letters,

⁸⁶⁰ BOA İ.DH., 288-18091, 23 Rebiülâhir 1270.
Dirhem: 3.1 gram

⁸⁶¹ BOA HR.MKT 98-73, 17 Rebiülâhir 1271.

⁸⁶² BOA HR.MKT 98-24, 14 Rebiülâhir 1271; HR.MKT 96-28, 28 Rebiulevvel 1271.

⁸⁶³ BOA HR.MKT 87-35, 5 Muharrem 1271.

provided they were first read by the Ottoman authorities.⁸⁶⁴ Some of these letters were published in the Russian newspapers *Journal de St Petersbourg* and *Russkii invalid.*⁸⁶⁵

Generally the bona fides of the Ottoman Empire can be understood from official correspondences. When a Cossack captain was sent to Istanbul, the central government asked from the local authorities to transfer him “with ultimate peace and security” and the prisoner was “not to be injured in any way”.⁸⁶⁶ Yet, generally speaking, the Russians who were under French and British control were satisfied.⁸⁶⁷ The Ottomans were unable to show the necessary care. French and British prisoners of war in Russia, however, were better treated than Ottoman soldiers. They were not forced to work, and were given more rations and allowances than their Ottoman counterparts. There was a degree of reciprocity in the treatment of the prisoners. The Russian prisoners complained of the need of new garments. Some Russian prisoners who were healthy worked upon the roads, for which they were allowed a shilling sterling each per day.⁸⁶⁸

For many sections of Ottoman society and irregulars in the Ottoman army, there was little distinction between a slave and a prisoner of war. Doctor Sandwith claims, “Parties of Bashi-Bozooks were constantly making expeditions over the frontier, and every prisoner they took they considered their own property.”⁸⁶⁹ Not all Ottoman subjects were accustomed to the European rules:

⁸⁶⁴ BOA HR.MKT 89-69, 22 Muharrem 1271.

⁸⁶⁵ Beslan Abukov, a Russian officer of Circassian origin, was a prisoner of war in Istanbul. “Opisanie semi-mesiachnogo plena russkogo ofitsera v Konstantinopole”, *Sbornik izvestiy, Prilozheniya*, vol. 25, pp. 8-10; Russkie plennye v Konstantinopole i na ostrove E (Aix), vo Frantsii, v kontse 1854 goda”, *Sbornik izvestii, Prilozheniya*, vol. 25, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁶⁶ BOA HR.MKT 132-79, 6 Cemaziyelevvel 1272 [14 January 1856].

⁸⁶⁷ Milovidov, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁶⁸ McCormick, p. 124.

⁸⁶⁹ Humpry Sandwith, *A Narrative of the Siege of Kars* (London, 1856), p. 149.

The Turks are sufficiently Europeanized to have partially broken through these customs, for I believe all the Russians who fell into their hands during the Danubian campaign were duly delivered over to the authorities at Constantinople, and afterwards exchanged; but in this remote part of the empire [the Caucasus], far removed from European interference, the Osmanlis seem to retain this among other of their ancient characteristics.⁸⁷⁰

6.2.2.4 Return to Russia

The prisoners were exchanged throughout the war, as the belligerents were sympathetic to the idea of exchange. The number of captives was too small to affect the outcome of hostilities; therefore, exchanges were conducted for humanitarian rather than strategic considerations. As the Russian prisoners in the hands of the Ottomans were much fewer than the Ottomans in Russian hands, the Russian prisoners captured by the French army were used to exchange for Ottoman prisoners.

The Ottoman state was certainly sympathetic to the notion of Muslim prisoners remaining in the Ottoman Empire and serving in the Ottoman army. Numerous Poles, Jews and some Russians were accepted into the legions of the British army.⁸⁷¹ The wage of a soldier in such legions was of course much better than the rations of a prisoner. They also enlisted in the Polish legions of the Ottoman army under the command of Michał Czajkowski and Adam Zamoyski.⁸⁷²

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid, p.147.

⁸⁷¹ Milovidov, p. 31.

⁸⁷² BOA A.MKT.NZD 156-40, 14 Zilkade 1271.

6.2.3. Conclusion

The nature of captivity has changed over time. During the Crimean War, modern humanitarian law was not yet fully established, but there was a sort of common understanding in Europe regarding the treatment of prisoners. The enslavement of prisoners of war had been gradually abandoned as a result of the enlightenment and the development of international law in the 18th century. While the institution of slavery was practiced by both the Ottoman and Russian societies - although the actual practice differed considerably - they had both adopted the European tradition by the 18th century. During the Crimean War, prisoners of war were no longer slaves appropriated by individuals or the state. Their freedom was restricted for the duration of the war. In the Ottoman Empire, which was an ally of France and Britain, prisoners had to be treated humanely. Yet rules and actual practice were not always compatible.

Life in Istanbul - the logistical base of the allied armies - was of course not easy for the Russian prisoners. It was especially so for those under the control of the Ottoman army, as the Ottomans were not in a position to afford to provide satisfying conditions for prisoners of war. Therefore, the Russians may not have received all necessary care. Conditions were similar for those who were accommodated at Kütahya. The Anatolian Muslims were of course not happy to live with the enemy. Despite the Russian prisoners faced difficulties, the Ottoman government seemed to be doing its best regarding their treatment. However, there are more sources on captivity in Russia, and hence many details of the lives of the prisoners in Russia during the Crimean War can be explored. Obviously, the Ottoman prisoners were not placed on an equal footing with the Europeans. The prisoners of the naval powers

also hardly had cordial relations with their Muslim allies. There were thousands of Ottoman prisoners in Russia. Many of them died, and some of them did not return. However, captivity in Russia generally seems to have been tolerable, especially for the European prisoners.

We do not yet have sufficient information regarding the peculiarities of captivity during the Crimean War, especially in the case of the Russians in the Ottoman Empire, which obviously demands further research.

6.3. War, Army and Society

In the Ottoman military studies the impacts of war on the Ottoman individual and the Ottoman society have generally been overlooked. By portraying the Ottoman society and its army as a united entity committed to the same objective, researchers have ignored tensions and problems between the local population and the troops.⁸⁷³ Accordingly, popular assistance (rather than resistance) to the war effort has been better analyzed than have the problems associated with the war. A Kurdish or Albanian irregular, a wounded Ottoman private, a drunken Ottoman officer, a Bulgarian driver or carpenter, and a Muslim villager were all participants in the war. The assumption that they all had the same wartime agenda, however, may be an illusion about the Ottoman society and an oversimplification of the Crimean War. In this chapter, the war experiences of the Ottoman individual (civilian and military)

⁸⁷³ One of the authors of the Crimean War claims that the Ottoman state and society shared the same perspective towards the war. Besim Özcan, *Kırım Savaşı'nda Malî Durum ve Teb'anın Harb Siyaseti* (Erzurum, 1997), p. 1.

will be discussed with respect to the Danubian front of the Crimean War.⁸⁷⁴ While it will mainly concentrate on the Ottoman army and society, the Russian army and the Ottoman Orthodox population will also be mentioned when necessary to assess the popular view in the Balkans towards the two opposing powers on the Danube. There will be a discussion of the daily life of the soldiers to show that the war was not only about fights and deaths.

6.3.1. The Ottoman Army and Society

It is necessary to distinguish the regular and irregular units when assessing the fighting performance of the Ottoman army and when explaining the army's relationship with society. Therefore, first, relations between the regular forces and the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire will be analyzed, and then, the performance of the irregulars on the battlefield and their unlawful acts behind the front will be discussed. Finally, the daily life of the Ottoman soldiers will be briefly examined.

6.3.1.1 War is a Burden: Supplying the Army

The Ottoman army was composed of regular units (*asâkir-i nizamiye/asâkir-i muntazama*), auxiliaries, and irregulars (*başibozuk/neferât-ı muvazzafa*). Some parts of the regular forces were well-trained men referred to as *nizam*, and the rest were less well-trained, or totally untrained, reserve (*redif*) troops. In peacetime, regular

⁸⁷⁴ In recent years, some literature has emerged on the social aspects of the Crimean War. See, Edgerton, *Death or Glory*; Reid, *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire*; Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War*.

units were commissioned throughout the empire as an enforcing and intimidating power to exercise the *Tanzimat* reforms and preserve domestic security. In the summer of 1853, when war was already imminent, troops were transferred to the army quarters and fortresses in the Balkan and Caucasian frontiers. Volunteers also poured into the Ottoman capital and borderlands, similarly to how previous Russo-Ottoman encounters were carried out.

During the preparations and during the war itself, the Porte strived to mobilize the Ottoman subjects to supply the army and conduct defensive measures. At the same time, ironically, the Ottoman government sought to preserve the civilian population from any excessive use of force by the military units as it was particularly important to protect the *reaya* to sustain Western support. Thus, the commanders and local governors were constantly warned about their treatment of the Christian population.

The transportation of soldiers, ammunitions, guns, and food brought about a nationwide mobility and required a tremendous labor force. To be sure, life was difficult for the people who were living along the military roads or near the battlefields. In addition to the danger of battles, military demands were certainly difficult to endure and often exceeded the capabilities of the people. Civilians were asked to supply clothing and food, while grain and forage extracted from the local population were put into depots. The Porte utilized two basic methods for obtaining necessary supplies from the people: encouragement (*teşvik*) and coercion (*tazyik*). When grain or animals were procured, the officials stated that the bill would certainly be paid, but they never clarified the date of payment.⁸⁷⁵ The protection of soldiers from hunger and diseases required a well functioning system of logistics

⁸⁷⁵ "The Danubian Provinces", *The Times*, 10 September 1853.

along with the support of the population. As a result, military units, which lacked sufficient food, quartering and transfer, would inevitably be devastated even before any contact with the enemy forces. Worse, such troops would, in some instances, meet their needs by forcing or threatening the local population. Thus, the failure in logistics caused not only military troubles but social problems as well.

The merchants (or *mültezims*) supplied the military necessities after an agreement with the officials on the amount and price of materials, and the army stored the supplies, which would later be allocated to the various units. Meanwhile, the corrupt Ottoman bureaucracy brought undesirable outcomes. For example, in some cases, the supplies were never sent to their destinations. In other cases, materials were insufficiently allocated or were of poor quality. These factors meant that the Ottoman privates generally received less food and/or money than what was officially stated, while the *mültezims* or Pashas were making money at the cost of the lives of their soldiers. According to Reid, the Ottoman commanders looked at the army as a sort of *iltizam* property.⁸⁷⁶ The scarcity in 1855 in the Fortress of Kars was not only a result of the Russian siege but also of the corruptions in the army. In late 1855, the Ottoman soldiers in the Crimean peninsula were looking for food and clothing, and the troops in the town of Gözleve were almost totally forgotten. However, the Danubian army was relatively better supplied compared to the Ottoman troops in the Caucasus and the Crimea.

All sections of society participated in the financing of the war, either voluntarily or involuntarily. The “*iane-i harbiyye*”, an extraordinary tax in the form of an aid campaign, was one of the most popular concepts during the Crimean

⁸⁷⁶ Reid, pp. 32-33.

War.⁸⁷⁷ First, a portion of the salaries of the Ottoman officials was transferred to the war account. The local notables likewise “donated” some money for the Ottoman war effort. From various cities of the Empire, Muslim and non-Muslim populations alike participated in the “*iane-i harbiyye*”. Some authors have described the *iane-i harbiyye* as a voluntary and popular act.⁸⁷⁸ In fact, however, the means employed by the Porte to extract money require further elaboration.

Several buildings in Istanbul were used as hospitals throughout the war. The most famous one was the Selimiye barracks which was used by the British army. The French used the Russian Embassy, the summer residence of viceroy of Egypt in Kanlıca, the barracks in Ramızçiftlik, and Davudpaşa among many other buildings (see, chapter 4.4.). As there were insufficient public buildings for the allied armies, many private mansions were rented.⁸⁷⁹ However, the hiring was not necessarily a voluntary business.⁸⁸⁰ New hotels and boarding houses were opened every week, especially in Pera, but the accommodations were still insufficient.⁸⁸¹

In one case, residents of a locality in Istanbul showed their reluctance to rent their houses to the French doctors.⁸⁸² In another case, the French demand for using the *Mevlevihane* in Gelibolu as a hospital was rejected by the Sheikh.⁸⁸³ The French army would use some houses in the town for the sick soldiers until the founding of their hospital. The landlords were irregularly paid for their houses and the dwellings suffered from serious damages. Worse, some hired houses in Varna were totally

⁸⁷⁷ Badem, pp. 319-321.

⁸⁷⁸ Besim Özcan, *Kırım Savaşı'nda Malî Durum ve Teb'anın Harb Siyaseti* (Erzurum, 1997); Figen Taşkın, “Kırım Harbi'nin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na Etkileri ve İaşe Sorunu”, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, İstanbul University.

⁸⁷⁹ BOA HR.MKT 94-32; 100-30.

⁸⁸⁰ Badem, pp. 330-331.

⁸⁸¹ McCormick, pp. 206-207.

⁸⁸² Akyüz, pp. 151-152.

⁸⁸³ ATASE k. 5, d. 15, f. 26.

destroyed after the great fire of 1854.⁸⁸⁴ According to Slade, the best houses in Varna were occupied by the allies without any payment to the owners. He further claims that the inhabitants were unhappy with the drunkenness of the allied soldiers.⁸⁸⁵

While the military forces were billeted in the villages on their way to battle, there was no reason to think that the villagers welcomed the soldiers with open arms and willingly shared their scarce food with these unwanted guests.⁸⁸⁶ The system how the Ottoman officials or the soldiers were guest in the Christian villages was explained by Cunningham in detail. In this system, the soldiers did not pay for the food and the accommodation in both Muslim and non-Muslim settlements.

With regard to Conak (*Konak*) or giving quarters to Turks there are no great complaints made by the Bulgarian peasants. The person requiring quarters has to find the Kiaja of the village (a kind of messenger belonging to the Chourbagees) who assigns the quarters and then he gets the provisions required various houses in the village. A demand I believe is always made for the Barley given to the horses but this is seldom paid by the Turks. All over the district I travelled there are no complaint of the Turks ill treating the women and if they sometimes lay a whip over the shoulders of the men they must often either do this or go without supper. I refer only to the Pashalic of Rustchuk; I understand that in the Pashalic of Widdin the Turks often behave very barbarously when the peasant knows that the stranger will pay for what he gets there is no difficulty made to receive him into the house and to furnish him with all he requires, and generally from the house in which he lodges without requiring anything from other houses in the village. There would be some difficulty in putting an end to the Conak system in the present state of the country. In all Turkish villages there are certain "guests houses" to which all travelers repair at night fall. The masters of the Guests house has his family house or harem near and there supper is prepared and brought into the guests house, the master and any other grown up males of the family let down to supper along with the strangers. The strangers then sleep in the guests house and are free to depart next morning without any charge being made. The master of the House does not refuse a backshish and when he knows that he will get it he may even cause a dish to be added to the supper. The feed of the horses has to be paid for. I believe the village or community pays a certain sum for the support of these houses. In Christian villages there is no public house where a person can pass the night. In many villages there is a Tavern where wine and spirits bread and cheese is sold but there is no accommodation or room for sleeping. Therefore until some sort of a Public House is provided in Christian

⁸⁸⁴ BOA MVL 279-54.

⁸⁸⁵ Badem, pp. 169-70; Slade, p. 561.

⁸⁸⁶ Reid, p. 80.

village where strangers may sleep and get something to eat the Conak system must remain.⁸⁸⁷

Obviously, the civilian populace wanted to be away from the troops. Accordingly, the villagers living around the British camps in Varna left their houses.⁸⁸⁸

...the peculiarity of the country [the Balkans] was the absence of inhabitants. Except those in the service of the commissariat, drivers of mule carts and bullock drays, and now and then a wandering Bulgarian, none were to be seen. Fear had driven them to desert their homes; and it was not one of the least disadvantages attending the armies of the allies that they had to operate in a country practically deserted. The want of transport, felt even at Scutari and Gallipoli, became a positive evil in Bulgaria.⁸⁸⁹

When Mehmed Sadık Pasha, the commander of the Ottoman Cossacks, was searching for supplies for his troops, he found many Bulgarian villages deserted as the inhabitants had run to the mountains with their livestock.⁸⁹⁰ As population movements may have hindered the logistics of the army, there was a clear necessity to prevent the villages from being abandoned by convincing the people that their lives and property would be secured. In this regard, the arbitrary behavior of commanders and local governors needed to be prevented, as an upheaval would be the last thing that the Porte wanted in wartime. However, having employed almost all regular forces against the enemy, the Ottoman government made concessions with respect to domestic security and order.

⁸⁸⁷ TNA FO 195-444, pp. 337-345.

⁸⁸⁸ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 94.

⁸⁸⁹ Cassell's *Illustrated History of England*, vol. IV, p. 177.

⁸⁹⁰ "Zapiski Mikhaila Chaikovskogo", *Russkaya starina*, 1898, no. 10, p. 205.

Agricultural lands were damaged during the war, despite efforts of the authorities to prevent and punish soldiers who entered gardens and vineyards.⁸⁹¹ In one case, the British soldiers ruined a vineyard nearby the Selimiye barracks.⁸⁹² In the confusion of warfare, though it was difficult to maintain agriculture, farming in the vacant lands and preserving the cultivated areas were crucial.⁸⁹³ Throughout the hostilities, the possibility of prolonging the war made the harvest an even more strategic matter. Nevertheless, large territories were left uncultivated, and cultivated areas were heavily demolished. Adding to the problems, because the carts and animals were assigned to the military service, public access to several materials became even more difficult.⁸⁹⁴ Worse still, the storage of agricultural products for the army may have led to an increase in the prices of the products. Therefore, the Ottoman government tried to constrain grain exportation to prevent shortages and rising prices. Meanwhile, the need to supply the allied powers further worsened the situation. Fortunately, there was no threat of famine due to the good harvests in the Ottoman Empire during the years of war.

In short, cordial relations between the army and society were the key to the military success, and thus, troops and civilians should have protected each other. However, the declining living conditions in the Ottoman Empire naturally strained the state-society relations during wartime. Some problems erupted in both supplying the army and providing domestic security. Fortunately, relative military success and a positive international atmosphere disallowed the spread of disturbances.

⁸⁹¹ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/16.

⁸⁹² FO 195-452, p. 10.

⁸⁹³ BOA A.MKT.UM 164-17. The agricultural lands in Dobruja abandoned by their owners were reaped by the authorities. ATASE k. 46, d. 1, f. 32/7-7a.

⁸⁹⁴ Although the Porte wanted to limit the grain exportation, Britain was rigid in its stance against any kind of limitation. Therefore, the endeavors of the Ottoman local governors to prevent the exportation were challenged by the counter moves of the British diplomatic missions who argued that any prevention would be a breach of bilateral treaties. BOA HR.SYS 1192-1, lef 37.

6.3.1.2 The Labor Force

The preparations for war and the war itself necessitated a significant labor force. The transfer of ammunitions and supplies, the reparations of the old fortifications, and the constructions of the new fortifications could only be handled with the assistance of the society. The masters, workers and drivers were in acute demand and employed in numerous tasks. The shops in Shumnu were closed on certain days so the shopkeepers could assist in military efforts.⁸⁹⁵ The Ottoman army had only insufficient number of carts or package animals for the logistical activities. Thus, the transporting of supplies and munitions in the Balkans was usually the duty of the Bulgarian villagers. Although the military activities occupied most of the time of the Bulgarian peasants, the remunerations for their efforts were delayed to an unclear future time. Worse still, during the preparations for war in the summer of 1853, the villagers could not afford the time to harvest their crops, and as a consequence, they suffered substantial losses because of the heavy rains in autumn of that year.⁸⁹⁶

While the labor force can be divided into three categories: voluntary, forced (*angarya*) and paid, it is not easy to identify to which category the various workers belonged. In this regard, Slade provides some clues. “The inhabitants of a district, for example, are invited to build barracks for troops, a village for Caucasian immigrants or a lazaretto for cholera suspects. Having completed the work, they press for payment, and are put off from month to month with fair words. After a while, making a merit of necessity, they renounce their claim, and are rewarded by seeing

⁸⁹⁵ “The Danubian Provinces”, *The Times*, 10 September 1853.

⁸⁹⁶ “The Danubian Provinces”, *The Times*, 10 September 1853.

their ‘patriotism’ and ‘devotion’ duly lauded in the official Gazette.”⁸⁹⁷ This type of response played some role in worsening the relations between the state and society. Thus, people were reluctant to work in the fortifications and desertion was common among the workers. For example, the governor (*kaymakam*) of Shumnu was required to find new carpenters after the desertion of the previous ones.⁸⁹⁸

The fortifications in Vidin were jointly repaired by the inhabitants of the town and the army. When the war preparations were in progress in Shumnu, people voluntarily worked on the fortification of Eski Çengel.⁸⁹⁹ Workers were also hired at a rate of 100 *paras* to build blockhouses in the redoubts of Shumnu.⁹⁰⁰ There were, however, some official complaints concerning the attitudes of residents of Varna when works on the fortress was taking place:

The people of Varna not only abstained from assisting in the fortification works, but they also threw away their own garbage in front of the redoubts. The Ottoman soldiers had to work for ten days to carry out the rubbish... therefore, people of Varna between the ages of fifteen to forty should be encouraged to assist in building fortifications in return for the cleaning of their own trashes by the Ottoman army ...⁹⁰¹

Obviously, many people did not want to work on the fortifications, and the word “encourage” did not always denote that the volunteers actually worked. Perhaps a more conciliatory language was preferred in accordance with the conjuncture. The Porte avoided liabilities associated with bureaucratic decisions by portraying them as the misdeeds of the local governors rather than the malpractices

⁸⁹⁷ Slade, pp. 35-36.

⁸⁹⁸ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/11a.

⁸⁹⁹ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/6.

⁹⁰⁰ ATASE k. 8, d. 3, f. 14.

⁹⁰¹ Same document.

of the central government. For instance, the governors of Varna frequently changed apparently because of the widespread complaints.

The employment of drivers and their carts (*arabas*) was always on the agenda during the war efforts. A rotation of the drivers was considered on the Danubian front such that drivers from the north of the Balkans would be sent home on leave and new ones from the cities of Edirne, Sofia, Filibe and Nish would be called in to replace them.⁹⁰² When 100 drivers were requested by the Ottoman forces at Kalafat, the governor of Vidin claimed that the non-Muslim population was already being forced to work on many assignments and forcing them to work in Wallachia would cause a popular revolt.⁹⁰³ Drivers, believing that they would never receive their pay and rations, were the most reluctant servants of the army. Dodd confirms that because the drivers did not receive payment, they took every opportunity of deserting.⁹⁰⁴ The muleteers and drivers in the Caucasus also declined to work for the Ottoman army, as they too were irregularly paid.⁹⁰⁵ Ill treatment and being away from home during the harvest were also reasons for deserting.

Furthermore, soldiers sometimes employed drivers without any official orders, which negatively affected the logistics, and the “aforesaid people who were thus terrified avoided carrying wood, flour and other materials.” Sometimes the Ottoman soldiers simply boarded already heavily loaded carts, a behavior that caused many animals to perish under such physical duress. Because the carts and animals were so horribly abused, the resistance of the peasants to work for the Ottoman army was

⁹⁰² BOA İ.DH 288-18116

⁹⁰³ ATASE k. 4, d. 12, f. 6.

⁹⁰⁴ Dodd, p. 102.

⁹⁰⁵ Reid, p. 72.

understandable. To help ease the relations between the drivers and the soldiers, the Ottoman troops should have first applied to the officials to use the carts.⁹⁰⁶

As it was, however, the uneasy relations between the drivers and the soldiers never ceased. The reluctant service of the local population can be observed in the memoirs of the British soldiers who claimed that inhabitants were unfriendly and were not in the mood to cooperate. One reluctant driver, who was forced to work for the British army, took off his knife, and finally burnt his cart down.⁹⁰⁷ Another driver quickly disappeared as soon as a British soldier entered into the depot. Russell's interpretation of the incident is quite descriptive as he states, "How such clumsy bodies move so quickly is miraculous. In our service they are as slow as snails."⁹⁰⁸ Simmons points out the impact of lack of money on the Ottoman logistics, "the army begin to want transport, not being able to replace the bullocks, hundreds of which have died from a disease which has prevailed amongst them for some time, and the civilian drivers and cattle tenders not being paid, fly, so that their places are required to be filled up by soldiers, thus diminishing the effective army."⁹⁰⁹ The transportation of the European armies in the Balkans was no better, "Dreadful work with the transport. Arabadys deserting with their oxen, leaving the carts behind. Impossible to organize with only one interpreter, who only speaks Italian."⁹¹⁰

The army-society relations were frequently tense in wartime as evidenced by the aforementioned examples between the cart drivers and the soldiers. People tried to avoid any material loss and did not want to be separated from their families.

⁹⁰⁶ "ahali-i merkûme bu cihetle ürküp hatab ve dakîk ve sair eşya getirmekten ihtirâz etmekte", ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/5.

⁹⁰⁷ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 103.

⁹⁰⁸ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 94.

⁹⁰⁹ Captain Simmons to General Lord Raglan, Ibrail, 17 November 1853, *Russian War 1854*, pp. 398-401.

⁹¹⁰ *Some Records of the Life of Stevenson Arthur Blackwood*, p. 58.

Therefore, the Ottoman army, by and large, used forced labor, which resulted in the desertion of the workers becoming standard behavior. Nevertheless, not all the people were forced or reluctant to work for the army. In fact, for many people, war was an opportunity. For example, merchants earned a good deal of money by answering the demands of the army. The tradesmen of Istanbul prospered greatly by the continuance of the siege of Sevastopol. Minasian, an Armenian who had an American passport, kept a shop in Istanbul. Having received a contract from the English government for the manufacture of iron stoves, he imported many from the United States.⁹¹¹ Moreover, the interpreters and servants who worked for the allied troops were enthusiastic, and those, who knew some French and British were almost all employed. The allied armies also contributed to the commercial booms in Istanbul, Varna and Gelibolu, as the soldiers bought eggs, vegetables and chickens from the local population when they became bored with the army rations. This proved to be a positive effect, as the local population was happy to make a profitable trade, and the soldiers were happy to find rare products in wartime. Thus, the shopkeepers were not necessarily unhappy with the visitors' long stay in Istanbul.

6.3.1.3 The Unhappy Encounters: the Civilians and the Soldiers

Istanbul, Varna and Shumnu were crowded with military camps, and as a consequence, contacts in public places between civilians and troops increased, which meant that disturbances also increased along with the intensifying relations. For example, soldiers in Shumnu who visited the public baths (*hamam*) caused some problems in the downtown area, which resulted in the erection of tents of ablutions

⁹¹¹ McCormick, p. 205.

(*gusul çadırları*) in the quarters.⁹¹² Nevertheless, as disturbances could not be avoided, Ömer Lütfi Pasha issued an order to prevent such undesired relations between the military and the civilians. The order stated that if Ottoman soldiers “exchanged rude words with the Muslims and non-Muslims in the market places” or “dared to clap or deliver a blow” such “undesirable acts” (*harekât-i nâmerziyede*) would be severely punished. The soldiers were further required “to act with honor and not to dare molestation” (*ırz ve edebleriyle gezmeleri ve hiçbir tarik ile destdirâzlığı cesaret etmemeleri*). The Ottoman army command warned the civilians as well, stating that disrespectful conduct on the part of the civilians would not be tolerated and that those who misbehaved or cursed (*muamele-i baride ve şetm*) the Ottoman soldiers would be arrested.⁹¹³

After the arrival of the British and French troops, the Ottoman cities hosted many adventurers who hardly obeyed the warnings of the Ottoman police. Thousands of allied soldiers resided in the Ottoman capital for months with no purpose but to wait for their expected campaign to the Crimea. During this time, the allied soldiers engaged in many fights, and the streets were terrorized with “the perfectly lawless manner the enlightened Allies often treated the unenlightened Turks.”⁹¹⁴ Contributing to the quarrels and fights was the access the soldiers had to cheap alcohol. In Varna, a fight erupted between an Ottoman soldier and a British soldier when a gun was accidentally fired.⁹¹⁵ Such fights were more frequent in Istanbul. The Albanians, the Croats and the European soldiers also fought many times. One of the major fights in Istanbul was between the French and the Tunisians.

⁹¹² ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/4a.

⁹¹³ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/23a.

⁹¹⁴ McCormick, p. 202.

⁹¹⁵ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 103.

These encounters sometimes ended with serious casualties.⁹¹⁶ The public order failed at Pera, where “crimes were committed with impunity in open day; assassinations occurred in the middle of the street, and the passer-by went on his way, as if he had seen nothing.”⁹¹⁷ Among the French soldiers received into the hospitals at Pera, there were many who had been wounded in the frequent street quarrels of this suburb. The Ottoman police was not capable of stopping the undisciplined activities in the capital. The French obtained permission to establish police at Pera which proved to be useful. “The Turkish guards stationed at the corners of the streets, saluted the English and French officers whenever they passed, and allowed the riotous proceedings of the drunken sailors to go unrebuked. The organization of a French police was favored, when the treacherous Greeks infesting the city had deliberately murdered several sailors and soldiers, and otherwise disturbed the peace.”⁹¹⁸

When the newly established battalions arrived at the battlefield, the old ones were weakened and lost their fighting spirit resulting in many soldiers losing their lives, suffering serious injuries and being sent back home. Thus, there was immense traffic on the highways, a factor that again increased interactions between the civilians and the army. Unfortunately, as there are no diaries from soldiers that might disclose the many realities of military life during the Crimean War, we cannot fully portray the events behind the front especially those that occurred on the military highways. The irregulars, however, were the major cause of aggressions behind the front, and without sufficient control of the irregular units, the population was not safe. In one case, the volunteers from Aleppo acted disorderly on their way to the front. The government resolution not only claimed that these troops would be sent

⁹¹⁶ Akyüz, pp. 147-154.

⁹¹⁷ Baudens, p. 146.

⁹¹⁸ McCormick, p. 203.

back but also warned the local authorities that newly established irregular cavalry could be brought to the front only if under strict control.⁹¹⁹

Many soldiers found opportunity to desert in the confusion of war. As the punishment for desertion was imminent death, it can be argued that, for many of the conscripts, the conditions in the army were intolerable. There were claims that desertions on the Caucasian front were frequent and that many soldiers who attempted to run were shot by court-martial. “This afternoon a poor wretch is caught hiding in a cave, previous to making a run, and is brought up, tried by a court-martial, and shot within an hour of his apprehension. This is the first military execution in the army of Kars since the commencement of the war.”⁹²⁰ Some deserters crossed enemy lines, while others disappeared with no trace. In some cases, the local population offered aid to the deserters. In one case, two young men who were convicted of helping some deserters were hanged in the marketplace in the Fortress of Kars.⁹²¹

In this regard, hastily gathered units of the reserve were especially prone to desertion. In fact, the establishment of reserve units was a serious handicap for the social life and the work force in the countryside, and the petition of the *redif* soldiers serving in the Dardanelles clearly portrayed the discontent. “We left our households and properties desolate and in misery … our harvest totally perished in the land, and thus there is hardly any crop remaining for the subsistence of our families...”⁹²²

The prisoners are another overlooked aspect of the Crimean War. The Russian soldiers captured at the Danubian front were sent either to Istanbul or Kütahya. The

⁹¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 27-28.

⁹²⁰ Sandwith, p. 275.

⁹²¹ Ibid, p. 277.

⁹²² BOA İ.DH 286-18020.

diaries of the Russian prisoners indicate that they were not happy about the treatment they experienced while imprisoned.⁹²³ Obviously, the Ottoman society was not very sympathetic toward the Russian prisoners, keeping them in strict isolation and limiting their contacts with the non-Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire.⁹²⁴

Victims of diseases such as dysentery, diarrhea, fever, cholera, scurvy and typhus were more frequent than of the bayonet, sword, and shell during the Crimean War. These epidemics, fortunately, did not spread to the civilians, and thus, did not have a significant impact on the social sphere.

The porter and ale sent out for the consumption of the troops could not be carried inland for want of carts and horses; the water was bad, and the men drank the red wine of the country, and, in consequence, fell victims to disease. Diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, made their appearance in the camps, and the graveyards began to fill. Then the air was polluted with horrid exhalations, and in addition the men pined for action. So that, although the sites of the camps looked healthy, bad management, imperfect food and drink, intemperance, a burning sun by day and chilling dews by night, soon reduced the physical and moral stamina of the troops.⁹²⁵

Initially, wounded or sick soldiers were visited by their families or by fellow townsmen who would bring food to the hospitals. However, because the food that the visitors brought was often not appropriate for the diet of the sick, this practice was soon prohibited.⁹²⁶ We have no statistics regarding the number of the wounded and sick who survived, but we assume that they were not many because of the lack of medical staff and the shortage of supplies and materials in the Ottoman Empire. A visitor to the Ottoman hospitals in the Crimea well portrayed the insufficient medical

⁹²³ “Opisanie semi-mesiachnogo plena russkogo ofitsera v Konstantinopole”, *Sbornik izvestii otnosyashchikhsya do nastoyashchei voiny*, vol. 25, prepared by N. Putilov (St. Petersburg, 1856), pp. 8-10; “Izvestiya o nashykh plennykh v Konstantinopole”, *Morskoi sbornik*, no. 6 (1856), pp. 127-129.

⁹²⁴ BOA A.AMD 69-56.

⁹²⁵ *Cassell's Illustrated History of England*, vol. IV, p. 176.

⁹²⁶ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/12.

care which might also be valid for other Ottoman hospitals: “A number of the dilapidated houses in Balaklava composed the only Turkish hospital, and it was said that none of the many patients conveyed to the establishment ever came out alive. Scarcely any attention was shown the feeble sufferers. Many were carried to the miserable hospital on the backs of their comrades.”⁹²⁷

6.3.1.4 Distrust between the Ottoman Army and the *Reaya*

Although the Ottoman army enjoyed (voluntary or involuntary) support of the Ottoman society in general, there were also many people who collaborated with the enemy, particularly the Bulgarians on the banks of the Danube River, the Cossacks in Dobruja, and the Kurds and the Armenians in the Caucasus. Some of the Ottoman Christians retreated with the Russian army into the Russian frontier lands.⁹²⁸ The main reason for population movement was the fear of punishment. Russia’s encouragements were also instrumental in convincing the Bulgarians to leave their fatherland. There was even an article issued for a general amnesty in the Paris Peace Treaty to reestablish the previous demographic structure of the region. Nevertheless, there were always population movements in the Russo-Ottoman wars that eventually culminated in the Muslim expulsion from the Crimea, the Caucasus, and finally the Balkans.

There were likely different underlying factors affecting the popular perception as to whether an army was an enemy or a friend. In other words, being subject of a state is insufficient to explain the behavior and conduct of the local population.

⁹²⁷ McCormick, p. 98.

⁹²⁸ E. V. Belova, “Formirovanie volonterskikh otriadov iz zhitelei Balkan i Pridunaiskikh Knyazhestv vo vremia krysmkoi voiny”, *Istoricheskii vestnik*, Spring 2007, no. 16, p. 23.

While shared national and religious identities were important, the wartime experiences and post-war expectations were sometimes more crucial. The expectations regarding the economic, social and political outcomes of war had repercussions on the popular perception of the war and on the fighting armies. In this regard, the troublesome relationship between the Russian army and its co-religious Wallachians is a good example as the Russians' desire to obtain a legal basis for its rising influence over the Ottoman Christians was one of the major causes of the Crimean War. However, the Russian logistics, i.e., accommodations, transfers and supplies deteriorated the relations between the Russian troops and the local population of Wallachia.⁹²⁹ The Wallachians who experienced the strict control of the Russians between 1848 and 1851, well remembered the unhappy relations. The British press portrayed the relations between the Russians and the local population of Wallachia in a very gloomy way. "The last accounts from the Danubian Principalities give an afflicting description of the condition of the peasants in Wallachia. They are in such a state of misery that they have no other resource than death or insurrection against the Russians. The exactions of the Russian military authorities are incredible. They take from the inhabitants cattle, corn, and all means of existence. The peasants are consequently compelled to fly their homes, and the sowing the land is completely neglected."⁹³⁰

After the departure of the Russian army in the summer of 1854, the Habsburgs entered the principalities, and the inhabitants involuntarily received their new guests.⁹³¹ In fact, the Ottomans, who had little potential or political will to intervene

⁹²⁹ ATASE k. 4, d. 12, f. 4.

⁹³⁰ "The State of the Continent. France (From our own Correspondent), Paris, 7 February", *The Times*, 9 February 1854.

⁹³¹ Barbara Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821-1878* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 56.

in the domestic affairs of the principalities, were perceived by the local population better than the co-religionists – the Habsburgs and the Russians.

With the exception of the Cossacks and the Christian irregulars the Ottoman army was manned entirely by Muslims, and was fighting for the sake of religion, at least in theory. The Ottoman society, however, was certainly more heterogeneous than its army. It was not realistic to argue that the Ottoman society, which was composed of various religious and ethnic identities, had a unanimous attitude towards the Ottoman army. The Christians did not convert immediately in spite of the *Tanzimat* reforms into loyal and trusted subjects. When the depots in Varna set on fire on 10 August 1854, the usual suspects were the Greek residents of the city.⁹³² Russell narrates the following: “It is said to have been the work of incendiary Greeks, some of whom, who were found with matches on their persons, have been arrested.”⁹³³ This is a good example regarding the way the Greeks were perceived by the allies in wartime. One observer frankly claimed, “With their avowed sympathy for Russia, and intense enmity to the Turks, I wondered that they [the Greeks] were not expelled from the city [Istanbul].”⁹³⁴ Those people who were called “obscure personalities” (*meçhulu'l-ahval*) and who were not allowed to walk around the quarters were most certainly the Christians.⁹³⁵ The presence of the Christian notables (*çorbacis*) who were perverting the people at the front (*İfsâd-ı ezhâr-ı ahâliye cüret etmekte olan çorbaciların*) was observed as inappropriate by the Porte, and thus, it was decided that these notables should either be brought into Istanbul or be severely warned (*tenbihât-ı şedide icrâsi*).⁹³⁶ On the other hand, it was not easy to move the

⁹³² Bogdanovich, vol. II., p. 140.

⁹³³ Russell, *The War: From the Landing at Gallipoli to the Death of Lord Raglan*, p. 138.

⁹³⁴ McCormick, p. 203.

⁹³⁵ BOA A.MKT.UM 151-39.

⁹³⁶ ATASE k. 8, d. 3, f. 15.

Christians away from the Ottoman troops as the Christians were needed for many tasks in the Ottoman army. In one case, İlya Efendi, who was a respected scribe known for his excellence in the profession, was suspected of working for the Russians. The Ottomans, however, were not sure whether it would be better to remove him from his post or allow him to remain.⁹³⁷

The Ottoman army was also responsible for preserving domestic security by placing battalions throughout the empire. The *nizam* battalions were used to deter and suppress any unrest or upheaval, and the fact that the battalions were called back to fight against the enemy resulted in breakdowns in maintaining domestic security. Worse still, the police forces were also summoned to the front.⁹³⁸ On behalf of the police, the irregular forces, particularly the Albanians, were commissioned in the countryside. However, the extent to which these hastily collected fresh forces could provide order and security was unclear. Thus, it was necessary for the Ottoman government to make some concessions in terms of domestic security to strengthen the fighting forces at the front.

Bekir Rüstem Pasha, the governor of Yanya, explained that the Albanian soldiers could not maintain order as they were not loyal, and the local people did not want them there. Therefore, although the regular forces were required at the front, they were also needed in Yanya - a strategic province where there was the possibility of an insurgency.⁹³⁹ The abandonment of Yanya by the regular forces caused tensions

⁹³⁷ BOA ZB 1-18

⁹³⁸ ATASE k. 2, d. 7, f. 12; k. 9, d. 7, f. 11.

⁹³⁹ “Arnavudluk askeri... asâyiş ve emniyyet-i ahâli hâsil olabilecek sûrette harekât-ı rızâcûyâne ve sekenât-ı sadîkâne me’mûl olamayıp bazı gün uygunsuzluk ve ahâlice yüzlerinden şikâyeti muceb hoşnudsuzluk vukuu melhuz ve muhîtemel bulunduğuandan ve Asâkir-i Şâhâne’nin her ne kadar mahall-i mezkûreye nakl ve azîmetleri ehemm ise de nezâket ve ehemmiyet-i mevkîyyesine nazaran burada bulunmaları dahi vacibeden idîginden bu bâbda diün ecnebi konsoloslari tarafından ve İslâm ve reaya câniplerinden Asâkir-i Nizâmiyye-i Şâhâne buradan gittiği halde bizim dahi emniyetimiz gider denilerek burada kalmaları istida olunmakta olduğuna...” ATASE k. 2, d. 7, f. 3.

between Bekir Rüstem Pasha and Ömer Lütfi Pasha, the commander of the Rumelian Army. According to Rüstem Pasha, with no reliable military units, the local Greek population would certainly revolt.⁹⁴⁰ And he was right. During the war revolts would broke out in Epirus and Thessaly in Rumelia, and Dersim and Cizre in Anatolia. The small state of Greece in Morea, under the rule of Bavarian Prince Otto, wanted to utilize the international atmosphere and sent some regular and irregular forces to Epirus and Thessaly to support the revolts. The revolts in Epirus and Thessaly, however, would not have had much effect on the ongoing war as they were far from the war theatre. They were suppressed by the allied forces shortly afterwards.⁹⁴¹

As a Serbian revolt and the Russian support for such an uprising might have caused significant setbacks in the defense of the Balkans, the Ottomans strengthened the defense at Vidin to prevent any Russian contact with Serbia. Russia wanted and planned to instigate revolts in the Ottoman Balkans. However, such plans were never acted upon because Russia did not want to spoil its relations with Austria. According to Slade, Russia did try to inflict a revolt in Bosnia and Herzegovina. “October, 1854, a Russian envoy came to Cettigno, and tried without success to induce Prince Daniel to organize a Christian insurrection in Bosnia and the Hirzgovin.”⁹⁴² Actually, it is unlikely that Russia organized or assisted in any revolution in the Balkans. In this regard, the Greek revolts could not enjoy any real support from Russia.

The international conjuncture and the course of war did not present an available environment for the Russians to apply a policy of nationalities in the Ottoman Balkans. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the extent of sympathy towards the Russians among the Ottoman Christians during the Crimean War.

⁹⁴⁰ ATASE k. 2 d. 7, f. 7/2; BOA İ.DH 273-17122.

⁹⁴¹ Schroeder, pp. 172-175; Badem, p. 165.

⁹⁴² Slade, p. 64 footnote.

Nevertheless, there were Bulgarian and Greek voluntary units in the Russian army.⁹⁴³

The fact that some Nekrasov Cossacks, Greeks and Bulgarians worked for the Russian military intelligence indicates that the relationship between the Ottoman Orthodox subjects and Russia continued during wartime.⁹⁴⁴

It was not difficult for Russia to gather intelligence in the Ottoman lands via its previously established contacts with the *reaya*. Those who helped the enemy were punished. Some spies were shot, some were sent to forced labor and some were deported.⁹⁴⁵ On the other hand, because propaganda was crucial and the Porte did not want any negative information dispersed at the front, the spies of the Porte conducted public surveys to understand the popular views concerning the war and the state.⁹⁴⁶ For example, a Greek was arrested for claiming that Ömer Lütfi Pasha was captured by the Russians and they would soon arrive at the gates of Istanbul.⁹⁴⁷ It is clear that, the population was under surveillance, either open or secret, during the Crimean War (see, chapter 6.1.).

6.3.1.5 Failure in Preserving the Public Order: The *Başibozuks* (the Irregulars) and the *Zaptiyes* (the Police)

The Ottoman army possessed irregular detachments as it had in the previous Russian wars. However, now the Porte was more reluctant than before to employ undisciplined and improbable irregulars as such individuals could easily damage the

⁹⁴³ Maria N. Todorova, “The Greek Volunteers in the Crimean War”, *Balkan Studies*, no. 25 (1984), pp. 539-563; Belova, “Formirovanie volonterskikh otriadov iz zhitelei Balkan i Pridunaiskikh Knyazhestv vo vremia krysmkoi voiny”.

⁹⁴⁴ ATASE k. 3, d. 11, f. 43; BOA HR MKT 66-29.

⁹⁴⁵ BOA HR.MKT 77-87.

⁹⁴⁶ BOA İ.HR 105-5143; A.MKT.NZD 112-113.

⁹⁴⁷ BOA A.MKT.NZD 110-77.

Ottoman prestige in the eyes of the European powers. Although the officials were cautious to prevent any atrocities in transit of irregular forces, the localities were clearly terrorized by the irregulars. Russian official documents and newspapers always emphasized, and most likely exaggerated, the misdeeds of the Ottoman irregulars against the Christian population in the Balkans, thus it is not possible to determine the extent of troubles caused by them. The Ottoman government in its every act wanted to preserve the affirmative public opinion and political will in Europe and therefore did its best to control the irregulars who did not contribute to a positive image.

During the Crimean War the irregulars were referred to in various ways. While the Albanian, the Kurd, and the Laz indicated ethnic structures, the *Kircali* and the *Zeybek* denoted geographical origins. The most famous expression, however, was an umbrella term – the *başbozuk* (in English frequently as Bashi-bazouk).⁹⁴⁸ In the official parlance, it is meaningful that the irregulars were generally referred to *neferat-i muvazzafa* or *asakir-i muvazzafa* – terms that denotes regular units commissioned by the state.⁹⁴⁹ The expressions *neferat-i muvazzafa* and *başbozuk* were semantically opposite terms as the latter refers to irregular and unruly troops. By preferring the term *neferat-i muvazzafa*, the Porte obviously tried to save the irregular troops from any negative perceptions.⁹⁵⁰ Moreover, there was a real effort to transform them into reliable troops. There was some type of an order, at least on paper. The chieftain, who was called the *sergerde*, commanded a specific number of men who were deemed eligible for military service, while those, who were found to

⁹⁴⁸ ATASE k. 3, d. 9, f. 51.

⁹⁴⁹ This usage paves a way to misunderstandings in the literature. When explaining the irregular forces, Akyüz thinks that he is talking about the regular army – the *nizam*. Akyüz, pp. 27-28.

⁹⁵⁰ Gültekin Yıldız, “Kara Kuvvetleri” in *Osmanlı Askerî Tarihi. Kara, Deniz ve Hava Kuvvetleri 1792-1918* (İstanbul, 2013), p. 43

be unfit, were sent back home. A register was kept that was to include the number of soldiers and their costs, and they would receive ammunition from the government (*muvazzaf cephanesi*) along with their pay and their rations. These rules were applied, for example, to the *neferat-i muvazzafa*, who reached Shumnu under the command of Kalkandelenli Hasan Ağa.⁹⁵¹ Thus, the voluntary troops were similar to the regulars, at least on paper, and they could be useful under the command of a reliable chief. Even though the Ottoman authorities could not always control the irregular troops, they usually made an honest effort toward this end.

The annihilation of the Janissary corps and the *Tanzimat* worsened the relationship between the Ottoman state and the Muslim population, and Ömer Lütfi Pasha brutally suppressed the Bosnian unrest just a few years before the Crimean War. Some Muslim communities, including the Bosnians, the Albanians and the Kurds, did not want to give conscripts to the regular army. Nevertheless, the war was an opportunity for the local notables, and they obviously wanted to exploit the circumstances. The formation of a military unit under the command of a local chieftain was a traditional method in the Ottoman military system. In this regard, the commanders of the forces coming from Kega and Toska were the Albanian *beys* who were approved by the Porte.⁹⁵² Cafer Dem Ağa, an Albanian chieftain, and İzzeddin Şir Bey, a Kurdish notable, applied to the Porte with their men to participate in the war. Bedirhan Bey's men, a prominent Kurdish leader who were in exile in Candia, were also sent to the Balkans. However, these chieftains, who actually had less than good relations with the central government, perceived the war as an opportunity to promote their own interests. They, of course, understood very well that the *Tanzimat* reforms were aimed at decreasing their influence in the localities for the sake of

⁹⁵¹ ATASE k. 9, d. 5, f. 1/8; k. 4, d. 11, f. 13.

⁹⁵² ATASE k. 2, d. 6, f. 15/1; k. 2, d. 7, f. 14/1.

centralization and modernization. Nonetheless, centralizing state apparatus never terminated the employ of the local chieftains.

The Ottoman irregulars were in mixed formations such that in addition to various ethnic backgrounds there were also Christians.⁹⁵³ Furthermore, some *başibozuks* were well-known criminals,⁹⁵⁴ and because the *başibozuks* were not accustomed to the military hierarchy, they were more loyal to their own chieftains than to any other commander.⁹⁵⁵ Therefore, they were incapable of showing the requisite rigidity and discipline on the battlefield.

The Ottoman irregulars were approached to and perceived by the Western observers in two different ways. Sometimes, their exotic characteristics were highlighted. Kara Fatima Hanım from Maraş was described as the Sheikha or the Amazon of the East by contemporary articles and books. On the other hand, from a military point of view, the *başibozuks* were characterized by their inabilities and undisciplined actions on the battlefield. The principal tasks of the *başibozuks* were to conduct surveillance and fight in minor cavalry skirmishes with enemy forces. Some irregular forces that acted independent of the main forces used every opportunity to loot the villages and acquired the spoils from the peaceful villagers rather than from the enemy.

A letter sent from the *Seraskerlik* to the Governor of Yanya and Üsküp during the preparations for war, accurately described the problems with employing irregular troops. According to the letter, the *sergerdes* would be required to assure the

⁹⁵³ For instance, there were Catholic Albanians among the irregulars. Reid, p. 134; Czajkowski, p. 53.

⁹⁵⁴ Mustafa, a Gypsy, was also a convict. Reid, s. 112; RGVIA, f. 846, op. 16, d. 5415 ch. 1, l. 8-10.

⁹⁵⁵ Reid, p. 130.

appropriate behavior of the *neferât-i muvazzafa* on their way to the front.⁹⁵⁶ On the other hand, the irregular forces were not as well-bred as the regular troops (*Asâkir-i Nizamiyye-i Şahane gibi terbiye görmüş asâkirden olmadıkları*). If unwanted incidents occurred regarding the Ottoman Christians or the foreigners, the Ottoman state would suffer great damages due to such an awkward situation (*şu vakt-i nazikte*). Therefore, the soldiers should be responsible and decent (*kefilli ve râbitalı*), and their chiefs should be well selected and tested (*mücerreb ve müntehâb ve rabta lâyikıyla muktedir*).⁹⁵⁷

The alliance of the Porte with the two Christian powers was one of the significant characteristics of the Crimean War. In its desire not to anger or upset the allied powers, the Porte tried to prevent any possible harm to the Christian population. But the Ottoman governors were not always successful in stopping atrocities: “Of those Captains, the one who had been guilty of the greatest atrocities on the march was the most grave, respectable innocent looking man in appearance of the whole file of henchmen, constantly expressing himself as perfectly resigned to the Divine Will.”⁹⁵⁸

According to the *irade* of 7 May 1854, any misdeed by the *başbozuks* would be stopped and the responsible parties would be immediately shot.⁹⁵⁹ Thus, while the

⁹⁵⁶ “...neferât-i muvazzafiyenin ber-muceb-i işâr tertibiyle takım takım Şumnu'ya sevkine ve yollarda edibâne hareket ve azimet eylemek zimnunda sergerdelere tenbihât-i lâzime icrâsına...” ATASE k. 6, d. 18, f. 1, 1 Ramazan 1269 [8 June 1853].

⁹⁵⁷ “neferât-i merkûmenin kefilli ve râbitalı adamlardan tahrîr ve tertîbi ve her bir takıma tayin olunacak sergerdelerin dahi her halde mücerreb ve müntehâb ve rabta lâyikıyla muktedir kimselerden nasbi hususlarında fevkelgaye ihtimâm ve dikkat olunması” Same document.

⁹⁵⁸ Paton, p. 81.

⁹⁵⁹ “...uğur-i hümâyûn-ı sultanat-ı seniyyemde cansiperane ve fedakarane ibrâz-ı hüsn-i hidmet ve ızhâr-ı mâye-i sîdîk ve istikamet eylemek emel ve arzusuyla bazı taraflardan tâhaşşûd ve tecemmü’ etmeye olan asâkir-i muvazzafa-i padişâhînem ki fi'l-asl başbozuk askeri denmekle maruf ve meşhurlardır. Bunlardan bazları doğrusu güzel hareket etmeye iseler de cümlesi bu suretde olmayarak içlerinden bazı hayır ve şerri fark etmeyenleri bu memuriyeti yağmacılığa ve edepsizlige fırsat addiyle gerek esnâ-yi râhde ve gerek bulundukları mahallerde haserât güruhunun mukaddemlerde meluf ve mutad oldukları tarik-i nâmüstakime sîlîk ve ehl-i İslâm ve Hıristiyan

Porte, on the one hand, employed irregulars to fight against the enemy, on the other hand, used the regular forces against the irregular forces. When the *başbozuks*, who deserted from the army, and the Tatars from the Dobruja region began terrorizing the local population (*zulm u teaddi*), the regular forces were sent to protect the villagers.⁹⁶⁰ A correspondent from *The Times* reported on how the irregulars were punished. “The Bashi-Bazouks continue to give much trouble. A few days since they fired on some of the regular cavalry. At Salpiga, not far from Shumla, the troops attacked the ruffians, who were greatly superior in number, killed two of the number, and brought seven prisoners to Omar Pasha. They were severely flogged, and two of them are since dead.” The correspondent continues and gives important details regarding the military punishment in the Ottoman army:

To explain this excessive severity, it must be stated that the General has not the power of life and death; there is no court martial capable of inflicting such a punishment; and accordingly men are sentenced to such a number of blows as will almost certainly produce death. The men in question received 500 blows each, administered alternately on the back and belly. Such punishments, however, seldom take place, and are only resorted to in cases of extreme atrocity.⁹⁶¹

After the alliance with France and Britain, the Porte was more cautious about the employment of irregulars. However, a state that wages war under the banner of religion (*cihad*) could not openly declare at reluctance to employ volunteers. The commanders of the armies were asked whether they needed auxiliary forces in the form of “*başbozuk*”, “*gönüllü*” or “*neferât-i muvazzafa*”. Although there was no

tebaa-i Şâhânenmin mal ve can ve irzlarina tasallud ile adâb-i insaniyet ve hamiyete ve askerlik sıfatına yâkişmaz nice nice harekât-ı kabihaya ibtidar ve hengâm-ı muharebede dahi zikri müstehcen bir takım fenâliklara ictisar etmeyece oldukları anbean istihbar ve tahkiki kılınmakta olup...” Hakkı Yapıcı, “Takvim-i Vekayı’de Kırım Harbi 1853-1856”, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Erzurum, 1999, p. 40.

⁹⁶⁰ BOA İ.DH 300-19001.

⁹⁶¹ “(From our own correspondent) Turkey, Constantinople, April 20”, *The Times*, 3 May 1854.

difference between these expressions, they were used in the document as if each term represented a different group. If there was no need for such military formations, then these volunteers should have been sent home without any offense.

There were two principal questions in the employment of the *başibozuks*. First, there was always the possibility of causing disorder. Second, they would demand their money. While the regular forces did not revolt when they were not regularly paid, these military units would compensate for their losses by taking from the civilians. Obviously, the Porte thought that without sufficient control, the volunteer units would bring damage rather than profit to the Ottoman war effort, in a conjuncture when the Ottomans allied with Christian powers. Stratford Redcliffe also regularly warned the Ottoman government against the excesses of the *başibozuks* and requested that these units be controlled. As a result, the Porte had to concentrate on the problems behind the front not only for the sake of its own population but also to preserve the valuable friendships with the Western powers.

Various sources claimed that the *başibozuks* also acted shamefully against women, but details were not given.⁹⁶² Colonel Neale, the British consul at Varna, informs Redcliffe that “the women were dishonored and many of the men and children killed” while those, who could escape, fled to the woods.⁹⁶³ The Ottoman officials took some precautions to protect the honor of women.⁹⁶⁴ For example, the Primate of Varna warned the women not to go to town when military units were there.⁹⁶⁵

⁹⁶² “The Danubian Provinces”, *The Times*, 10 September 1853.

⁹⁶³ Badem, p. 420.

⁹⁶⁴ “The Danubian Provinces”, *The Times*, 10 September 1853.

⁹⁶⁵ “The Danubian Provinces”, *The Times*, 10 September 1853.

The Times published a letter that was sent by a *başibozuk* in July 1854 from the banks of the Danube River. It is not clear whether a real *başibozuk* wrote the letter or a British soldier wanted to express his opinions on behalf of a *başibozuk*. In this letter, a real or a fictional *başibozuk* expressed that they were just the scapegoats of any sad consequence, and they wanted their voices to be heard.

When our Sovereign (the Sultan) in his wisdom declared war against the cursed 'Moskova,' he sent his firman to all parts of his mighty empire to call upon his subjects and all true believers to arise and fight for their country and religion. All good Moslems arose at the summons, girded on their arms, and flocked from Kurdistan, Turkistan, Arabistan – in fact, from all parts of Asia Minor – to the seat of war. We had large hearts in our breasts, sharp swords by our sides, but little or no money in our pockets; our chiefs had spent what little they ever had in giving us arms, horses, &c., to make a good appearance before our master, the Sultan. Allah bless him! At first we were treated well, and had food given us, and fought and bet the accursed 'Moskov' whenever we had an opportunity. By degrees, as war continued and provisions got scarce, we Bashi-Bazouks, who had come so far, and left our homes, wives, and children, to fight for our country, began to be neglected; things got worse and worse, and we got less and less to eat. Some among us, who, when pressed by hunger... robbed the villages around for food; others sold their horses – as dear to them as their children – and bought bread. Things went on in this way for a long time; but, wherever there was fighting or hard work there were the Bashi-Bazouks. We had nobody to look after us, nobody to appeal to, no food, no money, and yet we were expected to do everything that those who are fed and clothed by the Sultan do and more besides. We are said to have plundered and robbed towns; but most of the crime committed were the work of the Albanian Bashi-Bazouks, and not of us poor Asiatics. Of late, many of us have been taken and beaten to death by sticks for taking bread.⁹⁶⁶

The owner of the letter also expressed his happiness for the French and British declarations of war. He stated that they would not suffer from hunger anymore as the British were just and generous. However, he was unhappy that although the French started to employ the irregular cavalry, the British army did not yet initiate such an employment. He declared that they would efficiently serve in the British army. This

⁹⁶⁶ "An Appeal from the Bashi-bazouks. To the Editor of the Times", *The Times*, 28 August 1854.

letter may be fiction and may be an attempt to generate positive public opinion for the establishment of the irregular forces under the command of the British army.

The *başibozuks* in Ereğli of Tekfurdağı caused an upheaval. They fired on whom they encountered with, sacked a church, and even to fire a gun over a captain of French steamer. The Sublime Porte criticized the local governor for not punishing those people.⁹⁶⁷ However, the local governor was only a scapegoat for the central government to conciliate the foreign powers. In fact, it is dubious whether the local authorities had enough power to suppress such undesirable actions. The unruly deeds of the irregulars behind the war can also be explained by their perception of the Ottoman Christians or *reaya*. Slade explains the view of the *başibozuks*.

The stimulus given to the Bashi-bazouk fever of 1854 was a weak deference to the popular delusion about the value of such a force. Much mischief, direct and indirect, ensued; by the withdrawal of hands from agricultural pursuits, by the unsettlement of men's minds, by idle consumption of rations, and by the exasperation often caused by the presence in Christian districts. Fervid Moslems, taking words in their literal acceptation, the Bashi-bazouks were not always capable of restricting the sense of expression, 'holy war'. With them, non-Mohammedans were all in one category of anathema. They looked to the war as a means of reviving their waning dominancy over the rayas: -the latent aspiration of the nation.⁹⁶⁸

Humphry Sandwith shares Slade's viewpoint.

But of the Bashi-Bozooks who have chiefly been employed in the present war, the following is only too true a picture: arrived at the scene of conflict, they are sent to the outposts; and if the enemy's frontier is ill defended, woe betide the poor villagers, who have to pay heavy contributions in heads, to furnish these bravoes with trophies, not to speak of other grievous exactions! If the frontier villagers are Christians, albeit subjects of the Sultan, they fare little better than foes with these irregulars.⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁷ BOA HR SYS 1345/5.

⁹⁶⁸ Slade, p. 188.

⁹⁶⁹ Sandwith, p. 157.

The *başibozuks*, however, were not always guilty. At least they were not the only responsible party in their deplorable acts. The Porte was in contact with only the *sergerde*, but in many cases those chieftains did not want to allocate the money they received to their men. Those who could not receive any pay or rations were forced to pillage the villages. Sandwith argued that the volunteers were in a very desperate position: “The poor devils themselves are sometimes almost as much to be pitied as their victims; they are preyed upon by the Chief who raised them; and who flees them of their pay and rations to the utmost extent of human endurance; they have often to sell their arms, their spare clothing, and lastly, their horses, to procure the necessities of life.”⁹⁷⁰

Charles Cunningham, who was charged by Redcliffe in late 1854 to investigate the social situation in the Balkans, gives the following information regarding the relations between the Muslim and Christian population.

My belief, founded on a long residence in Turkey, in that a Turk does not value the life of a Christian at all, not so much as he values the life of a dog, nay I believe that by many Turks it is considered meritorious and not infamous to take the life of a Christian. Persons who have resided in Turkey may say that the foregoing is too severe; that they are acquainted with Turks who, far from killing a Christian, would not intentionally do him harm. This I freely admit, still that same Turk looks on the taking the life of a Christian as a very different matter from taking the life of a Musulman. It is only justice to the Turk to add, that the Christians of Turkey generally, do not consider it a very serious crime to take the life of a Turk. Christians seldom take the lives of Turks because punishment is almost certain, Turks often take the lives of Christians because impunity is almost certain. When public opinion among the Turks does not place the murder of a Christian in the rank of crimes, and the law seldom punishes the offence, it is evident that no infamy can, in the opinion of a Turk, attach to the murderer of a Christian.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁷⁰ Sandwith, pp. 157-158.

⁹⁷¹ TNA FO 195/444, “Viceconsulate at Galatz and Ibraila, 1854–1855”, pp. 250-251.

The British and French armies also made plans to utilize the Ottoman irregulars.⁹⁷² The Ottomans generally welcomed such offers from the Allied powers as the irregulars were perceived as a burden that necessitated control.⁹⁷³ General Yusuf, a French commander who had war experience in Algeria, and Beatson, a British general who commanded an irregular force in India, were commissioned by their respective armies to form irregular units. The hasty French initiative failed, however, after the unsatisfactory campaign into the interior of Dobruja under the command of General Yusuf. The troops of General Beatson trained in Dardanelles for months, but after the fall of Sevastopol, peace initiatives accelerated and these troops never had an opportunity to demonstrate their battle skills. Nevertheless, the British commanders who were charged with the instruction of the *başibozuks* saw themselves as successful in their training of such savages.⁹⁷⁴

Actually as the *başibozuk* the *zaptiye* was also paid insufficiently and this salary resulted in a corrupt system since the *zaptiyes* were in search for the compensation from the civilian population.

Insufficient pay – The pay of a mounted Zabtiyie is one hundred and forty piasters per month, or Twenty two shillings, for which he must provide his horse and arms and feed himself and horse. On my present journey I paid as much as for Barley for the feed of one horse morning and evening, and nowhere have I paid less than p 3 ½. Therefore supposing the Zabtiyie only to pay the lowest rate is required monthly for this horse's Barley, leaving on which to support himself and family for a month. Now this low pay does not permit a Zabtiyie to perform his duty faithfully; he cannot live on his pay and must seek illegitimate means of supporting himself, among which tribute from Robbers and robbery itself may be reckoned. It is true that in the Christian villages the Zabtiyie never pays for his own or his horse's food; the law says he should pay for both, but he has not the means to pay were he willing.⁹⁷⁵

⁹⁷² Badem, pp. 257-268.

⁹⁷³ Redcliffe claims in a letter to the Porte: “*Vakia infak ve idarelerinden aciz olup bir takım ademlere nezaret etmek sıkıntısından kurtulacağı cihetle işbu suretle müşarünileyh Serdar-ı Ekrem hazretlerinin dahi memnun kalacağı memuldür.*” HR.SYS 1192-2, 15 Safer 1271 [7 November 1854] in Candan Badem, “The Ottomans and the Crimean War”, appendix 74, p. 447.

⁹⁷⁴ “The Bashi-bazouks. To the Editor of the Times”, *The Times*, 25 July 1856.

⁹⁷⁵ TNA FO 195/444, “Viceconsulate at Galatz and Ibraila, 1854–1855”, pp. 251-252.

Charles Cunningham, who was sent by expressed the defects of the *zaptiye* system in details. According to the British observer this system could not be a solution for the robberies and murders, but often a reason of such incidents. He thinks that only by giving them an adequate pay, a uniform, and by employing persons who had no local ties could turn the *zaptiyes* into an efficient body to preserve internal peace.

All the Zabtiyies belong to the district in which they act, and consequently have friends and relations all around, and are frequently connected in friendship or interest with the robbers, and therefore will not seize them. When it is attempted to appoint strangers as Zabtiyies the members of the Meslise [*Meclis*] are opposed, saying that the natives of the district should be provided for. The Zabtiyies have no uniform and therefore on the road cannot be known for good or for evil. The Zabtiye not unfrequently acts the part of the robber, stopping passengers and robbing and murdering them; while the robber often assumes the part of the Zabtiye, stopping passengers on the road under pretext of examining their Tescarets and then falling on them unawares. The robbers also enter the villages under the assumed character of Zabtiyies and obtain lodging and food for themselves and horses without payment and happy for the villagers if the robbers content themselves with this. ...it is generally believed that higher officers, even to the Chief of districts prevent robbers from being arrested, either directly, by not taking the needful measures, or indirectly, by their known indifference. Another great obstacle to the apprehension of robbers is the number of districts into which the country is divided, each with its separate police and authorities, and the officers of one district not being allowed to act in another district. The Zabtiyies of a Pasha can no doubt act all over the Pashalic but cannot enter another Pachalic, but the Zabtiye of a sub-governor can only act in the sub-district. A robber therefore has only to retire into another district after having committed a crime, and he is secure from immediate arrest. The Governor of the district wherein the crime was committed must write to the Governor of the District into which the criminal has retired, the Governor written to seldom takes any trouble in the matter, because the crime not having been committed in his district, his reputation does not suffer and perhaps he is pleased that an offence has been committed in the district of his neighbour. Good protection from arrest & punishment All persons with whom I have an opportunity of conversing, Christians and Turks, agree that everywhere hereabouts the robbers have protectors in powerful Turks both in and out of office, down to common peasants in every town and village.⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁷⁶ TNA FO 195/444, "Viceconsulate at Galatz and Ibraila, 1854–1855", pp. 251-252.

There were different motives to protect the robbers from the punishment. However, especially the local Ottoman notables, who were against the *Tanzimat* reforms, protected the criminals. These people were happy with the social and land systems, in which they found opportunity to promote their wealth and prosperity. Interestingly, the Christian population also considered the *Tanzimat* as a reason for the increase in murders and robberies.

The motives for giving protection differ in degree, from a partnership with the robbers and sharing the plunder, to a mere desire of protecting the Turk from being punished for an offence against a Christian, and to hinder the late reforms which give protection to Christians from being carried into effect. In every Meslise and in every district the person is openly named who is the chief protector of robbers. But even when the protectors of robbers are known it must still be difficult to ascertain the motives of each person and in what degree they are influenced by interest relationships & friendship, or the mere hatred of Christians and opposition to reforms for their protection. I consider however that all Turks of the old school, that is those opposed to reforms for the benefit of the Christians, see these robberies and murders of Christians with no unfavourable eye, and if they do not instigate to the committal of these crimes, they at least do all in their power to skreen the criminals from arrest and punishment. This I believe to be the great difficulty to putting down these murders and robberies now so frequent. But besides the mere hatred of Christians there is a powerful class of Turks in Bulgaria (and probably all over Turkey) who have interested motives for preventing the reforms for the protection of the Christians from coming into force. There are the great landed proprietors who even now in some instances oblige the Christians to cultivate their land, secure their crops without payment. Then there are all the Turks (and some Christians also) who are in the habit of taking the ictistams [*iltizam*] or Tiths, who at present profit by the unprotected state of the Christians, taking more from them than they are entitled to take and which they will not be able to do once the reforms are real.⁹⁷⁷

5.3.2. The Daily Life of the Soldier

⁹⁷⁷ TNA FO 195/444, “Viceconsulate at Galatz and Ibraila, 1854–1855”, p. 253.

Military life was more than just battles. A British author observed, “Pending this interval, employed in organising the army, there were balls, and banquets, and reviews to strengthen the alliance. The Sultan did two noticeable acts: he galloped his horse twice in public; and he spoke to a Christian woman, Madame de St. Arnaud! But this was the showy part of the business; the real work was done quietly, in the chambers of the embassy, in the quarters of the generals, and in the councils of war and consultation.”⁹⁷⁸ In Bucharest, officers paid regular visits to the operas, and Colonel A. K. Baumgarten expressed his dissatisfaction with the opera in Krayova. However, in Bucharest there were good performances. The balls were important for amusing the Russian officers in wartime.

The Russian officers found the balls to be an important form of entertainment in wartime. The Russian officers, who were generally accommodated in a house of a local notable, were known to dance and play with the young ladies, just as Lev Tolstoi did in Simferopol.⁹⁷⁹ In fact, because there was not much action on the Danube in 1853 and 1854, the soldiers and officers were, more often than not, idle. Tolstoi expressed his disappointment about his experience of war in the Balkans stating, “I have remained, and, to speak the truth, the kind of life which I lead here, being, as it is, somewhat dissipated, quite idle and very expensive, displeases me infinitely.”⁹⁸⁰

Gambling became one of the most important ways for the officers to spend their time, as did drinking. And both had negative effects on the army, although, in general, they were permitted. McCormick, an American observer, noted in his visit to Balaklava that ‘I saw very many poor fellows, so much overcome by excessive

⁹⁷⁸ Cassell’s *Illustrated History of England*, vol. IV, p. 176.

⁹⁷⁹ Leo Tolstoy. *His Life and Work* (London, 1906), p. 176.

⁹⁸⁰ Leo Tolstoy. *His Life and Work*, p. 165.

drinking, that they could not walk erect.”⁹⁸¹ The significance of alcohol in the daily life of soldiers and their relations with each other was well portrayed in his words. “[T]he party was a compound of the Saxon and the Gallic – the army and the navy – a friendly alliance in rum.”⁹⁸² French and English shops were increasing rapidly throughout Pera while there were several English shops in Uskudar, devoted to the sale of liquors, and having their patrons a number of the soldiers’ wives.⁹⁸³

Not much is known about Ottoman daily life, but drinking was certainly one of the pastimes of the Ottoman officer, and when compared to the Russian and allied armies, the social environment seemed to be a more masculine one. The European soldiers declared the importance of coffee and tobacco in the daily life of the Ottoman soldier. The laziness and unplanned activities were of their commonly complained characteristics by the Europeans.

6.3.3. Conclusion

There is not yet sufficient research explaining how various communities in the Ottoman Empire perceived the Ottoman army, though it was a real dilemma for the soldiers who were under the impression they were fighting a holy war against Russia while being ordered to treat the Christian population well. The alliance with Christian powers made the situation even more complex. The Porte was to provide and preserve the sympathy of the *reaya* and thus hinder the increasing Russian influence in the Ottoman domains. The role of public opinion was also important in the conduct of war. Because the opinions and attitudes of the population towards the

⁹⁸¹ McCormick, p. 103.

⁹⁸² McCormick, p. 200.

⁹⁸³ McCormick, p. 189.

war were dynamic, it was important to understand the changes in public opinion during the war. It was also evident and important to understand that the Ottoman government wanted to flourish good relations with the Orthodox population.

The success of different branches of army on the battlefield and their behaviors behind the front considerably varied. The regulars inspired more confidence from their commanders than did the irregulars and the reserves, and the relationships between the people and the regular armies were consistent with the laws and the regulations. However, the disobedient irregulars inflicted great harm and were the major causes of murders and robberies, applying their weapons against the civilians more frequently than against the enemy forces. While it was not easy for the Porte to refuse the crowds who came to fight for religion and state, these crowds brought more harm than profit, posing a real dilemma for the Porte.

The setbacks in the Ottoman logistical system did not only result in military problems but paved a way to grave social outcomes. First, they worsened the relations between the civilians and the army. Thus the Porte was forced to use intermediaries for several services to the army. For example, the *mültezims* supplied the army, while the *sergerdes* found the *başibozuks* to fight. As the Porte dealt only with the intermediaries, it turned a deaf ear to the problems of soldiers and peasants who suffered from embezzlements.

Tanzimat might have resolved several legal issues, but it is hard to argue that the new regulations were always adequately applied. The conscription and the supply systems of the army were both corrupt, and the army and the war were an obvious burden for the population. Therefore, people wanted a rapid conclusion to the hostilities. The Muslims, who manned the army, were affected by the war more so

than other components of the Ottoman society, and the human casualties were dramatic for the Ottoman army. As a consequence, only a small number of soldiers returned home after the war. Thus, the social polarization increased, as the Russo-Ottoman wars had an impact on the revolts of the Balkan Christians. Even the immigrant Muslim populations from the Caucasus and the Crimea, after the Russo-Ottoman wars, may have played a role in the polarization.

While there were several reasons for the rising interactions between soldiers and peasants, not much is, as yet, known about these relations. New studies on the conditions of war and military-society relations may provide information on the state formation in the Balkans. The identification and interpretations of these relations can offer clues to understanding the social and military outcomes of the *Tanzimat* reforms.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In late February 1853, Russian ambassador extraordinary Prince Aleksandr Sergeyevich Menshikov, arrived in Istanbul ostensibly to obtain a favorable response to the prolonged diplomatic crisis concerning the shrines of the Holy Lands. In fact, he had another agenda: the conclusion of a secret treaty with the Ottoman government following the example of the Hünkar İskelesi of 1833. This ambitious mission was doomed to fail, and having worsened the relationship between the two countries, the prince left Istanbul. In the aftermath, Russian troops crossed the River Prut into Moldavia and marched toward Bucharest. Nevertheless, Russia declared that the invasion of the Principalities was not an act of war but rather ‘a material guarantee’ to force the Porte to accept Russian demands. At such an uncertain juncture in the summer of 1853, the Ottomans did not hasten to declare war but prudently prepared for a possible confrontation. Consequently, from the Russian invasion of the Principalities in July 1853 to the Ottoman declaration of war in October, there was a tenuous state of neither peace nor war.

Accordingly, intensive diplomatic activities continued throughout the summer of 1853 to bridge the differences between the Russian and the Ottoman claims. The

Russian army placed approximately 80,000 men (the Fourth Army and part of the Fifth Army) in the Principalities, a number that could easily rise with the transfer of the Third Army. Evidently the Ottomans' failure to accomplish the necessary preparations, especially on the Danube, before the commencement of hostilities might have caused the Ottomans irreparable damage. Thus, armies, fortifications, supply lines and maps of the region were feverishly prepared. Meanwhile, both powers established espionage networks around the Danube River to monitor their opponent.

Russia waited for a diplomatic solution even after the outbreak of war, without using its army in Bulgaria on account of the probable intervention of France and Britain. In the autumn of 1853, a defensive strategy for the Ottomans was meaningful, as their war aim was to protect the Ottoman territory rather than to advance toward Russia. However, the aim and strategy of the Russian army were unclear throughout the war. During the occupation of the Principalities, when the Russian army was in a foreign land, there was a situation oscillating between war and peace for four months. After the declaration of war, the Russians were reluctant to engage any offensive, and another five months were needed to cross the Danube. The siege of Silistre was only ten months after the occupation of the Principalities. Nicholas I, who planned an occupation of Istanbul, had to be satisfied with a diplomatic victory against the Porte in the summer of 1853. In the spring of 1854, Russia was completely isolated. The siege of Silistre was the final attempt, but it was too late. The allied navies in the Black Sea and the threat of Austrian army in Transylvania did not provide Russia with a political atmosphere in which to conduct an easy war. The siege of Silistre was soon raised, and the Russian troops retreated to protect their own frontier. Menshikov, who failed in his mission at Istanbul, was then

to command the Russian army to defend Sevastopol. While Russia had to wage a war against France and Britain, the Porte lost its initiative in the war. Subsequently, it became a European war rather than a classical Russo-Ottoman confrontation. The Ottoman army was reduced somewhat to an auxiliary force.

The Ottomans had not long fought so well against their colossal neighbor. The Ottoman tactics were clear and feasible. It was first necessary to hold strategic positions on the right bank and on the islands. Ömer Lütfi Pasha also aimed to demoralize the Russians with minor battles. It is not clear whether the Ottomans could have succeeded to that extent without the intervention of the Great Powers against a more resolute Russian power. However, the Ottoman Danubian army showed that they possessed the potential to stop the Russians. In the light of documents, it can be claimed that Ottoman government had a clear plan, completely realistic, mainly defensive, and successfully practiced in the Danubian front. Ottoman army attained its aims on the Danubian front, that's to say to establish a strong defensive line and to discourage Russian forces for a successful offensive.

The war cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, but failed to resolve the Eastern Question. The Eastern Question arose mainly from the strength of Russia and the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, combined with the strategic importance of the Ottoman territories, especially the Straits, and the fact that they could fall into the Russian hands putting Russia in a very strong position and changing the balance of power in Europe. The Russian military might soon threaten the Ottoman Empire once again. Therefore, in retrospect, it is commonly accepted that the Crimean War was unnecessary and useless. However, although the war resolved little, it was

waged for something significant. The stakes were high when the European powers entered the war.

Several letters of the commanders to the *Seraskerlik* (Ministry of War) give interesting clues regarding preparations of the Ottoman army as well as its plans and expectations. Thus, this study conveys useful information to understand how an Ottoman-Russian war transformed into a European one. This study argues that the Ottoman government was not as irrational as it has been portrayed and that the Ottoman army was better organized than scholars have previously claimed. The conduct of diplomacy and the results of battles on the Danube clearly support this argument. However, the Ottomans lost their initiative after the allied intervention. The Porte also did not have a program and system of crisis management. As the war prolonged, the Ottoman army gradually weakened. The British and French, however, were better in handling with the wartime problems, and they were able to improve the workings of their war machines.

However, documents do not always utter the truth. They can manipulate the reality: the causes and effects of events might be either exaggerated or underrated. Strength and aims of an army as well as the losses and failures after a battle are likely to be exaggerated if the enemy was the case. Even the failures were written as a victory and medals and grants were distributed to the soldiers who showed ‘extraordinary bravery’. Thus, comparative studies are crucial, if not indispensable, for the history of war. Perhaps the most important and reliable source for a historian of war is the military reports sent from the front. Such reports include first-hand invaluable information on the proceedings of the battles as well as the results of them. Both the Ottomans and the Russians overstated the casualties on the ranks of

the enemy to show the insignificance of their losses and the success of their fight. Sometimes the same battle was portrayed as a victory by both parties. Moreover, both sides tended to exaggerate the number of the forces of the enemy. Similarly in the Ottoman documents there is a sharp disparity between the Russian and Ottoman losses, which also cover the facts. It is interesting to see how the same history narrated differently in the official documents and how this affected the history-writing. As shown for each and every battle on the Danube before the Crimean campaign the number of the warring parties, the losses and the results of the battles were far from authentic. Therefore, it is necessary to find a balance picture between two different stories of the same history looking at the data both sides conveyed. British diplomats and officers also inclined to exaggerate their role in the Ottoman Empire, probably thinking that would play a role in their future promotions. Thus, the accounts of Simmons, Redcliffe or any other British should be read with some reservations.

Although the local population of the Balkans was Ottoman subjects, Russia had significant influence on the Christians. These people felt some sympathy for the Russian army, and most of them did not necessarily see the invading army as an enemy. Thus, there was an asymmetry in explaining the state-society relations. The extent and strength of loyalty was never clear. The Crimean War was also an encounter between Eastern civilization and the West, which is why it is known as the Eastern War. European soldiers, correspondents, merchants, adventurers, and many other types of people poured into Ottoman lands to observe the war and the East with all its archaic and exotic characteristics. The Ottomans, including Muslims and non-Muslims, were in contact with such people for more than two years. Thus, mid-nineteenth century cultural perceptions should be emphasized. For instance, “Lazy,

coward Turks" and "filthy towns" were frequent European descriptions of the people and places they encountered.

In fact, updated monographs on the Russo-Ottoman wars are scarce. The Ottoman fortifications, particularly at Şumnu, Varna, Silistre, Rusçuk, and Vidin, and the Ottoman defense system must be updated to reflect new archival materials and archeological findings. Biographies of the 19th century Ottoman commanders, about whom little is known, should be researched to adequately evaluate their wartime performances. Finally, Ottoman history would benefit from further statistical information to supplement outmoded narratives and biographies in locating the Ottoman history in a global context.

Although a substantial literature exists on the Crimean War, many aspects of it have been overlooked, particularly related to the Ottoman participation. Ottoman public opinion, including both Christian and Muslim views, is an important subject for future research. Population movements during the war should be discussed in the context of the Russo-Ottoman wars because demographic warfare always existed between the rivals. Ottoman logistics also require further elaboration. Hopefully, this study raises questions that can inspire considerable future research.

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